

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Public Comments on 2020/2021 Furbearer Trapping  
Regulations and Quotas

*Swift Fox Comments.....page 2*

*Setback Comments.....page 59*

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*\*Please note that some of these comments may pertain to multiple topics; therefore, the page numbers are only meant as a general guide.*

## SWIFT FOX COMMENTS

1. *From: Alissa Farley <alissa.farley@gmail.com>*  
*Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:05 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] No Swift Fox Trapping*

Please do not trap swift foxes, not in support of that.

Alissa Farley  
Manhattan, MT

2. *From: Stephanie Bell <jasperjosh@comcast.net>*  
*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:19 PM*  
*To: Iverson, Daniel <Dlverson@mt.gov>; Citizens Advocate <citizensadvocate@mt.gov>*  
*Cc: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] As a MT regular visitor..*

I urge you to CLOSE the trapping of swift fox, require 24 hour trap checks at the very least (shocking this isn't already in place, how barbaric!), protect beaver who are keystone species for our precious wetland ecosystems, and enforce trap setbacks on ALL ROADS. How much further do these beautiful species need to get pushed to the brink? And for what purpose? Please, don't let their extinction be a blight on your beautiful state.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Bell  
SeaTac, WA

3. *From: Connie Burris <puggygirl13@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 9:14:15 PM*  
*To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping/swift fox*

I am contacting you Urging you to please Stop the trapping of the small swift fox, There is no reason to kill these small animals other than trapper's desires.. endless trapping will have harmful long term impacts these small animals are very social towards one another and when one is killed it causes drastic effects on thirds animal species.

The swift fox is only around 40% recovered there should not be A trapping season basically just so trappers can trap!

Trapping is cruelty it kills animals indiscriminately it is more than time to Stop this unnecessary killing of wildlife and use real science and stop institutional bias that supports trapping no animals should endure trapping, we must become better people and have A conscience for other living beings.

Please Stop hunting the swift fox and

please I beg you Ban trapping no one needs real fur from inhumane cruelty

Thank you

Mrs Connie Burris/Daniels

4. *From: Steve and Amy Greer <sbalgreer@hotmail.com>  
Sent on: Sunday, July 19, 2020 8:38:57 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Foxes*

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to ask that you disallow trapping of the Swift Fox. There is no logical reason to continue trapping of this creature. Only 40% of their original range has been recovered. All wildlife struggles with changes in their environments that humans have wrought. Trapping is an unnecessary challenge that the survival of this species should not have to deal with.

Trapping is indiscriminate and causes unnecessary suffering--it is not fair chase. What reason would a trapper have to trap a little animal like the Swift Fox that is about the size of a house cat? I just don't understand. Trapping is archaic and certainly not a sport, and I could go on and on, but the pressing issue of concern at present is the continued recovery of the Swift Fox. Please don't allow them to be trapped.

Regards,  
Amy Greer  
21420 Poppy Lane  
Corvallis, MT 59828

5. *From: Alison Nicholls <alison@artinspiredbyafrica.com>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 9:16:17 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift foxes*

Dear Madam/Sir,

I would like to voice my concern over the trapping of swift foxes. There appears to be no scientific reasoning for the continued trapping of this species and I would like to oppose any plans to do so.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my views.

Alison Nicholls

Alison Nicholls

Sketch Artist ~ Art Safaris ~ Supporting Conservation

www.ArtInspiredbyAfrica.com [artinspiredbyafrica.com]

6. *From: Therese Blalock <heron7777@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:19:33 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>; Stephen Capra, Footloose Montana  
<Stephen@footloosemontana.org>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SWIFT FOX*

I am writing to ask that you protect the Swift Fox from trapping in our state. If nothing else, the current pandemic has made us all appreciate the incredible outdoor heritage we have here and the unique place we occupy on the planet. These small predators are already threatened by climate change, habitat destruction, and rampant illnesses suffered by other animals in the food chain like rabbits. Please do what you can to protect these unique beings from the depredations of trapping. They are living, sentient creatures that we are blessed to have here. There is much here that is bright and beautiful in a world where so much is dark and sad. Please have gratitude and compassion for our animal citizens and protect the Swift Fox from the manifest cruelty of trapping. I trust you to take care of them. Thank you sincerely from my heart. 🐾

Therese Blalock  
177 So 2nd # 7  
Hamilton, MT  
406-381-5971

7. *From: email4saundra <email4saundra@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:23:41 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*

Dear Sir or Madam

In 1995, the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that swift fox warranted Endangered Species listing. But other higher priority species precluded its listing, so state wildlife agencies created a Swift Fox Conservation Team.

Today swift fox inhabit only 40% of their traditional range. There is no logical reason to be trapping swift fox other than the constant demand by trappers to be allowed to trap.

When an animal has only recovered 40% of its original range, how can there be a trapping season? At a minimum, the agency should be restricting areas for trapping of swift fox and shortening the season.

The time has come for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to use real science and stop their institutional bias that supports trapping.

Please use real science and stop their institutional bias that supports trapping.

Thank you,  
Saundra Holloway

8. *From: Dylan Flather <dylan.flather@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 4:37:38 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox trapping*

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposal to expand the range that the swift fox can be trapped in Montana. While I am in agreement with shortening the trapping season for swift fox, there is no reason to expand the range of allowed trapping. In the assessment of your agency, "there is no biological or habitat difference to justify the boundary...". This animal has only recovered 40% of its original range! Trapping should be restricted in geography and time, with the eventual goal of extirpating the practice altogether. Trapping is a barbaric hobby that a small minority of people partake in and should not be allowed to continue. It is time for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to utilize science and stand up to a special interest group that has no place in modern society.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dylan Flather

9. *From: Amy Sprague <agsprague13@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Friday, July 17, 2020 1:31:27 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox trapping*

Hi-

I am emailing in regards to your upcoming decisions regarding trapping of the swift fox. The trapping of the swift fox seems to be completely recreational and not serving a purpose. **I am NOT in favor of expanding the range that swift foxes can be trapped.**

I'm curious if there is any solid evidence and science that goes behind making the decision to continue to destroy these animals and expand the areas in which we turn a blind eye and allow this?

**I am in favor of completely eliminating the trapping season for the swift fox and all animals, but if nothing else definitely shortening it.**

I am absolutely terrified of one of my dogs getting caught in a trap one day. But we continue to support trappers and their interests instead of the safety of the general public- this is unacceptable and it needs to be changed.

We strive to control the population of so many different species except for the most invasive, cruel and inhumane of them all- humans.

Thank you for your time. I know you guys have a hard job hearing all sides and appreciate you taking the time to do it.

Amy

10. *From: Gretchen Goodson <coyote@cyberport.net>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 1:49:50 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Trapping*

Hello Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Here is my comment to your proposed swift fox trapping.

1. These small and beautiful creatures have only recovered 40% of their original range. How can you even propose a trapping season for a creature that can't get a chance to recover let alone on less range than what it had before? That makes NO SENSE.
2. Even while some would suggest that the swift fox recovery has been decent, endless trapping continues to demonstrate a harmful long term impact upon this species which is socially monogamous. You kill a mate, it is for a life that was meaningful to its mate. That makes NO SENSE.
3. There is no such thing as trapping for sport. This kind of killing is wrong, dangerous, and disturbing. It is archaic. In today's world we are looking at environmental concerns/protections that are a proactive, positive approach to saving a species such as the swift fox. Harming the swift fox species makes NO SENSE.
5. Stop the trapping...any of it regarding any animal. In this case, it is the swift fox. It makes NO SENSE to allow death when we need to be working for protection and recovery of these small cat like creatures.

Thank you.

Gretchen Goodson

11. *From: Nancy Jochem <njochem@live.com>  
Sent on: Friday, July 24, 2020 3:42:31 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox trapping*

Dear MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

Please consider shortening Swift Fox trapping seasons and restricting Trapping area boundaries. The Swift Fox is far from totally recovered and needs greater protection. It is a sexually monogamous animal so it's population is vulnerable.

Thanks for protecting Montana wildlife.

Sincerely,

Nancy Jochem

9270 Trooper Trail

Bozeman, MT 59715

12. *From: Nancy Ostlie <nancyostlie@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Saturday, July 18, 2020 6:47:23 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on swift fox trapping*

Dear agency officials,

I have worked over the years to place limits on recreational trapping, and have had a little bit of success, getting the Commission to change some setbacks from trailheads. My belief is that trapping needs to be banned on public lands. Montana's wildlife does not belong to any individuals who want to kill it to make a monetary profit, as we all have a constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, and that means that native wildlife should be on the landscape so we can appreciate the benefits of a healthy ecosystem as our home.

Trapping is indiscriminate and kills many non-target animals. Swift foxes fill an important niche in the landscape and we should increase efforts to supplement their numbers, not target them for killing. At a minimum, shorten the season and decrease the area proposed for trapping them. Ideally, we will continue to work toward a ban on trapping statewide.

Nancy Ostlie  
Bozeman MT  
406-556-8118

13. *From: Norman Bishop <nabishop@q.com>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:00:25 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on proposed swift fox trapping season changes*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to kit fox trapping.

As a lifelong hunter, and having studied wildlife management in Graduate school at Colorado State University, I cannot imagine a justification for continuing to trap a species that has been in such dire straits in past decades.

As I understand the new rules, I am pleased to see the season shortened to exclude the mating season, but object to the expansion of the area where trapping is permitted. How can you justify that?

I was a member of the Yellowstone Center for Resources team that restored wolves to the park and the northern Rocky Mountains. I see carnivores of all sizes as essential members of intact ecosystems. Given

the projected loss of a million species worldwide, it seems to me we should be conserving, not harvesting them.

Indiscriminate trapping is hardly what I would consider management.

Norman A. Bishop  
4898 Itana Circle  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
(406) 582-0597

14. *From: <envirogail@q.com>  
Sent on: Saturday, July 18, 2020 2:54:37 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping of swift fox public comment*

We find the trapping of the small, imperiled, grassland dependent swift fox an abomination, just a gift by FWP to trappers, who seem to want to trap just about anything for fun. This animal is important to the biodiversity of our grasslands, eating small mammals, greens, carrion, insects and fruit, and it only occupies about 40% of its historic range. You should reduce or end trapping of swift fox. Restrict, do not expand range for trapping but do shorten the season to help this monogamous critter continue to thrive. There is no scientific basis for allowing trapping of swift fox. Trapping is indiscriminate, cruel and barbaric. Just say NO. Please do the right thing. Thanks for listening to the public not just to trappers.

Sincerely,

Gail and John Richardson

5263 Cimmeron Drive

Bozeman, MT 59715

15. *From: Ann Machek <afmachek@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 12:46:26 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping Swift Fox*

I oppose trapping of Swift Fox. This small mammal has only recovered 40% and still needs to be protected. Please do not continue to disrupt the balance of nature. Every species is a valuable component to a healthy environment.

Thank you,

Ann Machek

Sent from my iPad



16. *From: Suzanna McDougal <sumac99@icloud.com>  
Sent on: Sunday, July 19, 2020 10:02:02 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping swift fox*

To Fish, Wildlife and Parks:

The swift fox trapping range must not be enlarged. This small beautiful animal needs to recover from past over trapping.

The season for trapping this animal must be shortened and the areas for trapping restricted and this animal has only recovered 40% of its original range and there really should be no season at all.

There is bias to support trapping by a small percentage of people. This is not a sport and traps kill indiscriminately.

Suzanna McDougal

Hamilton, MT 59840

17. *From: David Shellenberger <dshell99@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 1:47:20 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping swift foxes*

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

I share Footloose Montana's concern regarding the trapping of swift foxes. All trapping is inhumane, and swift foxes and other furbearers should be protected, not killed.

Thank you.

David E. Shellenberger  
Advocate for International Animal Welfare  
Bethel, CT

18. *From: Alissa Farley <alissa.farley@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:00 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CLOSE the Trapping Season on swift fox!*

PLEASE - Montana Wildlife Commission I URGE you to CLOSE the trapping season on swift fox. Please.

Alissa Farley  
Manhattan, MT  
406-570-6312

19. *From: Lisa Robertson <lisa292@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:01 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect the Swift Fox, a and more*

Dear Wildlife Commission:

I am emailing you regarding the trapping of Swift Fox and related trapping issues.

I support the closing of trapping of the Swift Fox. Their numbers are in steady decline and they will soon qualify for listing under ESA rules. It's not clear why they would be trapped as their fur has very little market value. These animals are beneficial for farmers as they eat rodents and insects. I urge you to close the trapping of the Swift Fox, reduce the quote to 0.

In related matters, please make it mandatory that anyone who sets traps must check them daily. If these people have enough energy to go out there and set these inhumane devices, they have enough energy to check them every day. The suffering of animals caught in a trap is unimaginable for any period of time. It is not acceptable that they would have to suffer for days on end.

Please close the recreational trapping of Beaver. Beavers play an extremely important role in nature and ecosystem. There is no economic reason for trapping them and public sentiment is definitely not pro-trapping Beaver, Please use our tax dollars accordingly.

I am an avid hiker and trail runner and value greatly the benefits of recreating on public land. For the safety of the public (and their dogs) who use public access, please mandate 150' trap setbacks on all public roads. This would be consistent with regulations.

In the paramount interests of public safety there should be posting and trap setbacks near all waterways.

Trappers are a very small group relative to others who recreate and work on our public and private lands. I think the trappers are given an unfair advantage vis a vis the wishes of the majority of TAX PAYERS. I sincerely hope you will take into account my opinions.

Thank you.

Lisa Robertson

Missoula

--

Lisa Robertson  
[lisa292@gmail.com](mailto:lisa292@gmail.com)

20. *From: chrisalbertdvm@aol.com <chrisalbertdvm@aol.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 8:13 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox proposals*

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to urge you to decrease the swift fox trapping quota from 10 to 0.

The 2019 Montana Swift Fox Conservation Strategy states: "Dispersal of swift fox is critical for continuing to expand distribution and linking populations over long term. However, numbers have decreased in the past 10 years, since trapping has been allowed. Expanding trapping boundaries would hasten the demise of these animals and risk putting them on the Endangered Species List.

You have the ability to stop the decline of these animals, and your own strategy implies that you intend to keep the population viable. It would seem that DECREASING, not increasing trapping would be indicated.

Respectfully,

Chris Albert, DVM

21. *From: Harry's Email <hbwyeth@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 10:55 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox trapping regulations*

The best thing to do with regard to Swift Fox trapping rules is to completely eliminate trapping. This is overdue and most reasonable. No trapping, please.

HARRY WYETH

Sent from my iPad

22. *From: Genevieve Reid <reid.genevieve@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 8:12 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox trapping*

Dear Commission,

I am writing you out of concern for the survival of the swift fox. Swift fox numbers are well below their historic levels and occupy a small fraction of their natural range. As the swift fox face other pressures including habitat loss and climate change, their numbers will fall further. Trapping is unnecessary and cruel predation of these important creatures providing just a hobby for a few trappers..As a long time Montanan,

I ask you to completely end trapping of these animals, and at a minimum, I would ask that you reduce the quotas and reduce the season length.

Genevieve Reid

Six Suce Creek trailhead

Livingston MT 59047

406 -224-19 18

*23. From: Cathy Reich <jgossorcreich@blackfoot.net>*

*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:30 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*

Please stop allowing trappers to trap and kill swift fox. There is no reason for them to be killed and many reasons (why should I have to say this?) for them to be left alone.

Cathy Reich

1060 River Bend

Superior, MT 59872

*24. From: Renelle Braaten <renelle.braaten@enell.com>*

*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:59 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox and beaver*

PLEASE!!! CLOSE the TRAPPING of SWIFT FOX and BEAVER!

The best available science and the Swift Fox Conservation Team say their objective has been to restore swift fox to where they once were. Where it should have been years ago in my opinion! Why is Montana so set on killing all our animals? I was under the impression that we depended a lot on tourism in Montana for much of our economy?! I have heard and seen many comments on how they hate that we kill all our animals....just what they like to see when they come to Montana. Reduce the swift fox quota to 0 and at the bare minimum stop recreational trapping of beaver. Both and especially beaver are important to our ecology (science shows it every day!). We need them to fight the climate change problem. Humans need to stop fighting Mother Nature and learn to work WITH her! Do the right thing! PLEASE!

At the very least...update reporting requirements, require posting and establish/require trap setbacks near waterways and make it mandatory for daily trap checks!

Thank you,

Renelle Braaten

25. *From: Margot Lowe <margotlowe1@gmail.com>*  
*Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 9:33 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] regulations*

Close the trapping of swift fox.  
Reduce swift fox quota from 10 to 0.  
Mandatory 24 hr daily trap checks.  
Close the recreational trapping of Beaver. (What is recreational trapping of Beaver?)  
50 ' trap setbacks on public roads for consistency with regulations.  
Posting and establishment of trap setbacks near waterways.  
Highlight the reporting requirement change in the Furbearer regulations

Give animals a break!

Margot Lowe

26. *From: Mia*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox trapping*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 12:20:19 PM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission,  
I was disturbed to recently read about the ongoing trapping of swift foxes. I understand you are considering changes to the length of the trapping season, but I strongly urge you to stop the practice all together. There is no value to killing these creatures, and much harm to the balance of the environment by killing them off. I find the practice of trapping inhumane and cruel with no justification. Please be better stewards of the environment and animals who rely on our mercy.  
Thank you,  
Mia Savich

27. *From: Joy Stevens*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:59:06 AM*

Dear Commissioners,  
Please end the Swift Fox trapping season immediately and issue a moratorium. Their numbers are in perilous danger and I know you don't want it to be on your watch that was creature becomes

extinct.  
Thank you.  
Dr. Joy Stevens

28. *From: [madeintahoe@aol.com](mailto:madeintahoe@aol.com)  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox trapping  
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:46:09 AM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commissioners  
Today I write you to please stop any trapping of the Montana Swift Fox. Also please read below  
There is no need to be trapping the Swift Fox...Please consider everything in my email  
Please stop all trapping of the Swift Fox  
Thank you  
Anita Chittenden

1. **CLOSE the TRAPPING of SWIFT FOX.**

This is based on the most recent and best available science and to avoid listing under the  
ESA.

2. **Reduce the swift fox quota from 10 to 0.**
3. **Mandatory 24 hr/daily trap checks.**
4. **Close the recreational trapping of beaver.**
5. **Trap setbacks for ALL public roads.**
6. **150' trap setbacks on public roads for consistency with regulations.**
7. **Posting and establishing of trap setbacks near waterways.**
8. **Highlight the reporting requirement change in the Furbearer Regulations.**

29. *From: [Bill Walton](#)  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox  
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:34:55 AM*

Please stop the trapping of the Swift fox in Montana. There is no need for it as they are not a  
threat to livestock and their pelts have no value.--

Sincerely,  
Bill Walton

30. *From: [Sue Hodges](#)  
To: FWP Commission  
Cc: [Roz Switzer](#); [Willamette Broads Cyndi anderson](#)  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox  
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:30:50 AM*

Please consider stopping the inhumane cruel and totally Archaic practice of trapping for the  
Swift fox.  
Just another citizen part of a large majority who say, enough with the barbaric practices of last  
century.  
S Hodges  
Member, Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Middle Gila and Willamette Chapters

31. *From: [Michael Koeppen](#)  
To: FWP Commission*

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox**

**Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:17:17 AM**

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to express our opposition to any trapping season for the Swift fox.

We are aware that you are well informed as to the small numbers of the Swift fox in Montana, so we don't need to review that.

Why is it that you are always pushing for killing animals above preserving and encouraging their populations?

Swift foxes do not need to be "managed" in Montana. They are not predators of livestock, and their numbers are extremely low.

The only reason we can figure out, is that you are bending to the wishes of Montana's small and loud group of

trappers. Trappers whose power over the commission far exceeds their numbers. Trappers don't care whether they

drive any animals to extinction, and we know this from long experience meeting and listening to many of them in

person. They are not preservers of wildlife, but takers.

Do the right thing, stand up to the Montana Trapper's Association, and please end the Swift fox trapping season completely.

Sincerely,

Michael and Lynn Koeppen

300 Bull Run

Florence, MT. 59833

32. **From: Robin Layton**

**To: FWP Commission**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox**

**Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:16:29 AM**

Please heed the warnings about the sensitivity of this animal. Close trapping altogether on the swift fox please.

Robin D. Layton

[rlayt@outlook.com](mailto:rlayt@outlook.com)

33. **From: Margaret Crawford**

**To: FWP Commission**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop trapping swift fox**

**Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:46:34 AM**

Hello my name is Margaret Crawford, I'm writing this in regards to the swift fox. These small animals are barely

making it as it is without the fear and abuse that trapping causes. Trapping is an archaic and outdated form of

hunting (if you call it that) that needs to be eradicated. These tiny animals suffer untold days in agony and pain from

the claws of these traps, to wait to be skinned and sold at 15 dollars or so? Please Montana be a leader in stopping

trapping. I don't need it, they don't need it, we don't need it. And I'm pretty sure the swift fox and other animals

really don't need it either! I implore you please stop the use of traps and save a cute little creature that doesn't do any harm and keeps to it's self. Please  
Sincerely,  
Margaret Crawford  
Sent from my iPhone

34. *From: Charlene Crawford*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Trapping*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:42:03 AM*

I am writing today to ask the Commission to take action to close the Swift Fox Trapping season and take them off the list of legally trapped animals. There are too few of this precious species to continue to allow their trapping.

Swift Fox were reintroduced and barely allowed time to recover before a trapping season was allowed and now their numbers are dwindling. Please save the remaining native prairies and their beautiful native flora and fauna populations. Future generations deserve to know and experience the beauty of the natural world.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [[go.onelink.me](https://go.onelink.me)]

35. *From: Leslie Colley*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:50:49 AM*

Dear Chairman Colton and Commission Members,

I am writing to ask that you put a stop to the trapping of the swift fox in Montana by reducing the quota from ten to zero. This small, iconic animal that represents the wild, wide open beauty of your state has been persecuted to near extinction and deserves a chance to make a living, raise its young, be a part of Montana's wildlife diversity and landscape.

The swift fox is a beneficial animal - as are all fox species - and the pelt of the swift fox has little or no monetary value. What possible justification is there for continuing to trap these animals? I urge you Gentlemen to take this one small, but meaningful step and do what you can to protect the rare and iconic swift fox for now and for future generations. Thank you for your time.

sincerely,  
Leslie Colley

36. *From: Ester Gonzalez*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:39:26 AM*

I write this email to insist on the end of fox trapping. This is toxic behavior to cruelly harm, and torture foxes that were almost extinct. Please change the quota from 10 to 0 and protect and educate. Humans are not the center of the world and killing defenseless animals shouldn't be something sick people get off on.

Thanks for hearing my plea.

- Ester Gonzalez

90031

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone [[overview.mail.yahoo.com](https://overview.mail.yahoo.com)]

37. *From: frank\_wayman*



*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox trapping*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:38:00 AM*

Dir Sirs and or Madam

I would ask that you please stop allowing the trapping of the swift fox. It deserves a chance at a healthy, happy, lengthy. life. Same as you or I. Thank you for your time. Frank Wayman

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

38. *From: Edith Parrao*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox trapping*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:20:30 AM*

I urge you to close the trapping season on Swift fox.

Trapping is very cruel ! This war on wildlife has to end.

Sincerely,

Edith Parrao

39. *From: Ndeutsch*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:42:22 AM*

Close the trapping season on the swift fox!!!!

These creatures are an important part of the ecosystem, and should be treasured, not destroyed!!!

Nancy Deutsch

Sent from my iPhone

40. *From: Walter Lajara-Nanson*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Trapping*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:04:23 AM*

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a resident of the state of Montana and concerned with ongoing trapping of our wildlife; specifically the Swift Fox. Please take into consideration my thoughts and feelings regarding this matter, and the science behind it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Walter Lajara

CLOSE the TRAPPING of SWIFT FOX.

This is based on the most recent and best available science and to avoid listing under the ESA.Reduce the swift fox quota from 10 to 0.

Mandatory 24 hr/daily trap checks.

Close the recreational trapping of beaver.

Trap setbacks for ALL public roads.

150' trap setbacks on public roads for consistency with regulations.

Posting and establishing of trap setbacks near waterways.

Highlight the reporting requirement change in the Furbearer Regulations.

41. *From: Joe Annandale*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trap Free Montana*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 8:58:47 AM*

Please stop trapping animals that inhumanly die in absolute agony, I am talking about all animals but one especially needs help is the swift fox. It's numbers are so low in Montana anyway that it is close to extinction... again. Thank you for reading  
Joe  
Sent from my iPhone

42. *From: Eileen Sutz*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Cc: seaspriteileen@gmail.com*  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] The tiny Swift Fox - trapping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:49:41 AM

The whole shoulder, almost half of his/her body is smashed in the leg hold trap. This is the photo I'm looking at.

It's hard to fathom the suffering of and that it's legally okay for days and days to leave these little creatures

suffering in traps in MT???!!!!????!!

PLEASE stop the trapping of the rare swift fox and reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not

expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.

After returning to our state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of

over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping

season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347

remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively

impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox.

Their pelts are deemed worthless. I understand that trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat,

vixens simply

for the notoriety.

Again, PLEASE stop the trapping of the rare swift fox and reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

Thank you,

Eileen Sutz

43. *From: Angela James*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] trapping of swift fox  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:45:52 AM

Please stop the trapping of swift fox so that they can recover their population to a sustainable level. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

44. *From: julia punch*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:11:16 AM*

Most people do not use fur for real purpose. Its not needed.  
The death of this poor creature is a burden I dont want.  
Return Montana to the animals!  
Want to make money, do ya?  
Have your beautiful State overrun with free creatures living their best life. People will come running to Montana with money in hand.  
In fact, use it as a selling point!!  
"Come to Montana where animals are free from traps!"  
Thank you ahead of time. You can do this.  
(My Mom was born in Terry and we always loved it out there. Wide open space)  
Sent from my iPhone

45. *From: Stephanie Statom*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop the trapping of swift fox!*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:31:38 AM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission,  
Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox.  
The whole shoulder, almost half of his/her body smashed in the leg hold trap. It's hard to fathom the suffering and legally okay for days and days in MT. The rare 5 lb, 12" high, very easy to trap, imperiled icon of the American prairies..... the swift fox, really needs your help and now!  
Montana Wildlife Commission Please Stop the trapping of swift fox, reduce the quota from 10 to 0. There is no other option.  
During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.  
After returning to our state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.  
In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.  
The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10.  
From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.  
The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to Jan 15. Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border.  
This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography,

climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety.

Some claim to fame....I annihilated the last swift fox in Montana.....again!

From the best available science, Trap Free Montana Public Lands obtained, the basis in which the swift fox was removed from the ESA candidate list in 2001 are vastly different from today.

I URGE you to CLOSE the Trapping Season on swift fox!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Statom

[Trap Free Montana Public Lands \[facebook.com\]](#)

Trap Free Montana Public Lands

The whole shoulder, almost half of his/her body smashed in the leg hold trap. It's hard to fathom the suffering ...

[facebook.com]

46. *From: penny kaiser*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] TRAPPING*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:24:03 AM*

The swift fox, last known only 347 remaining in 2015, barely avoided being listed in 1994 under the ESA and a Swift Fox Conservation Team was formed. While reintroduction efforts continue, Montana also continues to allow trapping of these very rare, formerly extirpated, 5-7lb easy to trap foxes. Now FWP wants to extend the trapping boundary to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation to increase opportunities for trappers.

Trap Free Montana Public Lands (TFMPL) was the only voice for the swift fox during the June 25th Montana Wildlife Commission zoom meeting. We need your help! The swift fox needs you! Protecting them has been one of our ongoing priorities.

I am taking just a minute, now, to tell Montana Wildlife Commissioners,

Montana needs to Stop Trapping Swift Fox!

I do not believe in Traps, I urge you to pass a bill to make them obsolete. It is a torcher chamber for all animals.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety.

Some claim to fame....I annihilated the last swift fox in Montana.....again

Thank you, PHYLLIS KAISER

47. *From: Mary Lanis*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Foxes*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:41:07 AM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission,

I was disturbed to recently read about the ongoing trapping of swift foxes. I understand you are considering changes to the length of the trapping season, but I strongly urge you to stop the practice all together. There is no value to killing these creatures, and much harm to the balance of the environment by killing them off. I find the practice of trapping inhumane and cruel with no justification. Please be better stewards of the environment and animals who rely on our mercy.

Thank you,  
Mary Lanis  
[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone \[overview.mail.yahoo.com\]](https://overview.mail.yahoo.com)

48. *From: Dylan Flather*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping comments*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:39:18 PM*

I would like to voice my hesitant support for the proposal to expand the range that the swift fox can be trapped in Montana ONLY BECAUSE THE CURRENT INCIDENTAL TAKE IN THIS REGION DOES NOT COUNT AGAINST THE QUOTA. This take should count against the quota, so I do support the trapping range expansion given this is the reason for expanding the range. I am also in agreement with shortening the trapping season for swift fox. However, I believe that in general, trapping should be restricted in geography and time, with the eventual goal of extirpating the practice altogether. Trapping is a barbaric hobby that a small minority of people partake in and should not be allowed to continue. It is time for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to utilize science and stand up to a special interest group that has no place in modern society.

There are a few other points I would like to make:

The very least a trapper can do is check their traps once every 24 hours. If this is too difficult for them to accomplish, they should not be trapping.

It is disturbing that Montana allows the unlimited and unreported recreational trapping of beaver many months out of the year. These are keystone species. This, by definition, means they are critically important to their ecosystem. Conflicts with beaver can be effectively mitigated with non-lethal methods. There should be no beaver trapping in Montana.

Trap setbacks should apply to all public roads. I oppose "closed" road setback exclusions as these roads are still used by skiers and hikers.

The "Non-Target Capture Requirement" section in the 2019 Furbearers & Trapping regulation booklet should also be listed on page 1 under "Highlights", to promote trapper awareness and compliance.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Dylan Flather  
Hamilton, MT

49. *From: Becky Boreham*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] URGENT Montana Wildlife Commission; CLOSE the Trapping Season on swift fox!*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:47:32 PM*

Stop this barbarism!

The whole shoulder, almost half of his/her body smashed in the leg hold trap. It's hard to fathom the suffering and legally okay for days and days in MT.

The rare 5 lb, 12" high, very easy to trap, imperiled icon of the American prairies..... the swift fox, really needs your help and now!

Insist the Montana Wildlife Commission stop the trapping of swift fox, reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

After returning to our state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10.

From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.

The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to Jan 15.

Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion.

They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety.

Some claim to fame....I annihilated the last swift fox in Montana.....again!

From the best available science, Trap Free Montana Public Lands obtained, the basis in which the swift fox was removed from the ESA candidate list in 2001 are vastly different from today.

#StopTrapping #ProtectSwiftFox #SupportTFMPL

50. *From: Heidi Lein*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Trapping!!!!*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:40:51 PM*

Disgusting to see that such heinous activity is legal.

Shameful on the part of any lawmaker that has the power to stop it. Save the Swift Fox!

51. *From: karol@galaxseaonline.com*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] PLEASE STOP!*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:15:26 PM*

Dear Commission,

Please stop the horrible trapping of these Swift Foxes. For God's sake, is this really a necessity? We are destroying all the wildlife in this country and there is no need. Please please please stop it!

Karol Mayer [karol@galaxseaonline.com](mailto:karol@galaxseaonline.com)

GalaxSea Cruises & tours

210 N Business 49

Neosho, Missouri 64850

417 451 5468

[www.galaxseaonline.com](http://www.galaxseaonline.com) [[galaxseaonline.com](http://galaxseaonline.com)]

[facebook.com/galaxseacruises](https://facebook.com/galaxseacruises) [[facebook.com](https://facebook.com)]

52. *From: Liz G.*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Delivery Status Notification (Failure)*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:04:09 PM*

*Subject: TRAPPING*

Please, please close the trapping season for the swift fox.

It is SO cruel.

How would you like to be trapped? Stop thinking about yourselves and start thinking of animals.

Thank you.

53. *From: Julie Dougherty*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop the murder. Stop the trapping*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:59:00 PM*

During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was

eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does

not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

After returning to our state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of

over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping

season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347

remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10.

From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.

The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in

the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until

March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the

closing date to Jan 15. Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region

East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively

impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox.

Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We

are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety.

Some claim to fame.....I annihilated the last swift fox in Montana.....again!

Julie Dougherty

Sent from my iPhone

54. *From: Robert Mitchell*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Trapping - please discontinue.*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:54:40 PM*

Please outlaw trapping the Swift Fox. T

Sincerely,

Robert Mitchell

Get [Outlook for iOS](#) [aka.ms]

55. *From: Brigitte*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL]*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:50:13 PM*

PLEASE STOP THIS

BARBARIC,

UNCONSCIONABLE

PRACTICE OF TRAPPING

THESE LITTLE FOXES,

THEY AREN'T ANY

THREAT TO YOU, OR

FARMS, OR FAMILIES

PLEASE CLOSE the

Trapping Season on swift

fox!

People will forget what you said, they will forget what you did,

but they will never forget how you made them feel..

~~ Callme.....bratt ~~

56. *From: Renee Shafransky*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please stop the trapping of swift fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:19:46 PM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission,

This is cruel and horrible torture. Please reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

Please don't trap these foxes.

Sincerely,

Renée Shafransky

Shafransky171@yahoo.com

Sent from my iPhone

57. *From: Sheila*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:11:17 PM*

What is the point of slaughtering these little creatures??? Soon, all the wildlife will be gone from this world and then

what will we have? I'll never understand how someone can be "put in charge" of WILDLIFE and be given the authority to issue licenses to kill them???

Please stop. Just....STOP....leave the animals alone.



58. *From: Joyce Littlefield*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 6:18:53 PM*

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to urge you to Close the trapping season on Swift foxes.

With current population estimates of under 400 Swift fox remaining in the entire state it is bewildering why these fox, crucial to a healthy eco- system and in controlling rodent populations, would still be killed when they are on the brink of extinction.

Respectfully,

Joyce Littlefield

PO Box 1393

Lyndonville, VT 05851

59. *From: Jeff Martin*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:09:14 PM*

Sirs, Please end all trapping of Swift Foxes. This small fox doesn't need to slip into extinction on your watch. Please

do the right thing. Thank you, Jeffrey Martin

Sent from my iPhone

60. *From: Barb*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] public comment*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:03:25 PM*

Dear FW Comm,

I urge the following for your consideration. I am in District 1

1. CLOSE the TRAPPING of SWIFT FOX. This is based on the most recent and best available science and to avoid listing under the ESA.
2. Reduce the swift fox quota from 10 to 0.
3. Mandatory 24 hr/daily trap checks.
4. Close the recreational trapping of beaver.
5. Trap setbacks for ALL public roads.
6. 150' trap setbacks on public roads for consistency with regulations.
7. Posting and establishing of trap setbacks near waterways.
8. Highlight the reporting requirement change in the Furbearer Regulations.

Thank you for considering input from a Montana farmer,

Barbara Booher

Troy, MT.

61. *From: Barb*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] CLOSE/STOP trapping of Swift fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:54:52 PM*

Dear FWComm,

I am contacting you to request that you close or stop trapping of swift fox. This is an unnecessary and cruel form of mortality for the jeopardized swift fox that prioritizes a handful of Montana trapper's "notoriety" whims in destroying a rare

iconic species of our dwindling American prairies. I don't want Montana's actions to endanger this fox any further. You as FW Commissioners are allowing continued trapping which is unconscionable when the swift fox numbers are already threatened. This little fox eats rodents and insects which is a benefit to farmers. Their pelts bring less than \$10 so why kill them into extinction? Do you actually believe in protecting Montana's wildlife? Commissioners, this fox needs your help not more killing.

Thank You,  
Barbara Booher  
Troy, MT

62. *From: Jen*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping the rare Swift Fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:14:09 PM*

During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

After returning to your state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10.

From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.

The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season [starts Nov 1 \[x-apple-data-detectors\]](#) and runs [until March 1st. \[x-apple-datadetectors\]](#)

Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to [Jan 15. \[x-apple-data-detectors\]](#) Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety.

CLOSE the Trapping Season on swift fox!

-Jennifer Holtz

Sent from my iPhone

63. *From: Anthoney Mahateva*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] HORRIFIC TRAPPING OF FOXES.*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:08:04 PM*

Please stop this evil now. The suffering they endure is beyond belief.  
Anthoney

64. *From: Judy Sifers*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 4:04:13 PM*

The whole shoulder, almost half of his/her body smashed in the leg hold trap. It's hard to fathom the suffering and legally okay for days and days in MT.  
The rare 5 lb, 12" high, very easy to trap, imperiled icon of the American prairies..... the swift fox, really needs your help and now!  
Insist the Montana Wildlife Commission stop the trapping of swift fox, reduce the quota from 10 to 0.  
EMAIL: fwcomm@mt.gov  
During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.  
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In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.  
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Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox.  
Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety. Some claim to fame.....I annihilated the last swift fox in Montana.....again!

From the best available science, Trap Free Montana Public Lands obtained, the basis in which the swift fox was removed from the ESA candidate list in 2001 are vastly different from today.  
Sent from my iPhone

65. *From: McGuinness Paul*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please stop the barbaric treatment of the swift fox*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:21:00 PM*

Please close the trapping of the swift fox immediately. The violence south of the border never ceases to astonish.

It's hard to fathom the suffering these beautiful foxes have to endure. How can you possibly inflict such pain on one of God's creatures like this? Shame on you, shame on Montana, shame on you violent USA.

During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

After returning to our state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 left.

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The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to Jan 15.

Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

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From the best available science, Trap Free Montana Public Lands obtained, the basis in which the swift fox was removed from the ESA candidate list in 2001 are vastly different from today.

#StopTrapping #ProtectSwiftFox #SupportTFMPL

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [[go.onelink.me](https://go.onelink.me)]

66. *From: Michele Craig*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please save the swift fox*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:52:25 PM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission,

I urge you to CLOSE the Trapping Season on swift fox!  
Michele Craig  
260 Blodgett View Dr.  
Hamilton, MT 59840  
(406) 210-1375

67. *From: email4saundra*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox trapping*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:21:34 PM*

Pease stop trapping the swift fox.  
Reduce the quota from 10 to 0.  
Issue a swift fox trapping  
moratorium.  
Trapping is one known and  
unnecessary form of mortality in  
Montana for these little rare 5 lb  
foxes that needs to end to help the species try and recover!  
Extinction is forever!  
Help this species while we still can.  
Regards,  
Saundra Holloway

68. *From: Lynn Zephyr*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:25:36 PM*

Please accept my comment and I tried my best to get this to you by 5:00 pm.  
I ask that the Montana Wildlife Commission stop the trapping of swift fox,  
reduce the quota from 10 to 0.  
They play such an important role in our ecosystem and they already have  
other carnivores that hunt them. The swift fox takes care of our rodent  
problems, rabbits, and insects.  
Please don't allow the trapping of these animals. The traps are also  
indiscriminate and a danger to many other animals as well. We all know it's  
such a horrid and painful death as the animals suffer and don't die  
immediately.  
Thank you for the opportunity to comment.  
Lynn Griffith

69. *From: Suzanne Hodges*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] re: Montana Swift Fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:48:03 PM*

Costs for reintroduction: \$5,000,000 Canada for 943 swift fox.  
U.S. reintroduction costs: \$950 to \$5,300 per swift fox.  
Market value of swift fox pelt: 0 to \$7.  
Cost of extinction???  
I URGE the Montana Wildlife Commission to:  
Stop trapping the swift fox.  
Reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

Issue a swift fox trapping moratorium.

Trapping is one known and unnecessary form of mortality in Montana for these little rare 5 lb foxes that needs to end to help the species try and recover!

70. *From: Marc Cooke*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Comments*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:57:25 PM*

*Attachments: fb3a441c.png*

*Dear Chairman Colton, Vice Chair Stuker, Commissioner Brower, Commissioner Aldrich and Commissioner Byorth,*

*Please let us not forget that the swift fox has been reintroduced on two occasions in the past, which is costly and usually paid for with sportsmen dollars. Now we have a declining population again, and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks wildlife division wants to continue to allow the trapping and killing of these. Please keep in mind that our neighbor to the north has more of these animals, and they have protected status. At some point in the future and because of mismanagement for the benefit of the Montana Trappers Association, we could see swift foxes protected under the ESA.*

*Please discontinue the trapping of all Montana Swift Foxes and consider the view of the non-consumptive wildlife watching/enjoying public. Both local and otherwise!*

*Sincerely,*

*Marc Cooke*

*President*



*Marc Cooke*

*Wolves of the Rockies*

*Stevensville, Montana*

*Cell: 406.493.5945*

*[Marc@WolvesoftheRockies.org](mailto:Marc@WolvesoftheRockies.org)*

*501 C (3) All-Volunteer Org*

71. *From: Elaine Cury*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] The A swift FOX*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:43:07 PM*

**STOP trapping this fox!! Leave our national animals alone!** In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10.

From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.

The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to

breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to Jan 15. Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat.

Elaine Cury

72. *From: Katie Donovan*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Close the trapping season on swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:39:01 PM*

To the Montana Wildlife Commission,  
STOP the trapping of Swift Fox.

It is time to listen to your constituents and not just the small number of sadistic trappers who continue to plague our lands.

CLOSE the trapping season on Swift Fox. Do it Now.

Reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

Is this clear to you?

I have lived in Montana for over 35 years of my long life. I used to hike with my 2 huskies on public and private lands. Carefree and happy to let the dogs run and have them under voice control. In recent years, it seems traps and poisons are getting more and more pets. Unforgivable, in my opinion. I will never feel safe hiking with dogs (and small children) while trapping is allowed.

In the case of the SWIFT FOX, Montanans were given a second chance to enjoy a wonderful treasure, a beautiful part of the ecological web, when they returned after being 'extinct' for many years. This was surely a gift. Does no one on the Commission see that? Also, by encouraging and promoting trapping, you are alienating a huge percentage of outdoor enthusiasts who spend money in the state. Surely the dollar signs can help convince you.

Please give this some thought and do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Katherine Donovan

A Hamilton resident, formerly a resident of Butte

73. *From: Rhonda Lanier*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:30:14 PM*

I am writing to urge you to immediately stop the trapping and snaring of the Swiftfox in Montana.

These tiny animals weigh around 5 pounds; their pelts are worth around \$7.00 at the highest estimate.

Trapping and snaring is cruel and indiscriminate. The Swiftfox has natural predators of Badgers, Golden Eagles and Bobcats. Mother Nature is a much better control mechanism than anything we humans can come up with. Let Her do Her job and stay out of it.

Thank you for considering my comments on this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Lanier

Rhonda

74. *From: Kim santell*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:18:07 PM*

Please have the Montana Wildlife Commission stop the trapping of swift fox, reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

thanks,

kim

75. *From: Candice Copeland*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Quota*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:16:01 PM*

There are so few of these tiny animals after being eradicated in the State of MT already, why pick on them. Pelts are not worth much. Trappers have other animals to trap and kill. Please leave these necessary Foxes along.

ZERO QUOTA of Swift Foxes. Thank you

[\[about.me\]](#)

Candy Copeland

[about.me/candy.copeland](#) [\[about.me\]](#)

76. *From: Michelle MacKenzie*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Public Comments*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:47:37 PM*

To Whom in May Concern

I write to urge the commission to immediately stop all trapping of the swift fox in Montana. The quota should be

reduced from 10 to 0 and there should be a moratorium issued for trapping swift foxes in this state.

This species has declined significantly and recovery of this species is in danger. Further, the species face many

obstacles to their recovery in Montana including a fragmented landscape, increase in agriculture, climate change and

more. The department has spent a significant amount of money to reintroduce this species yet so little is received by

trappers for each swift fox pelt. This makes no sense!



For the foregoing reasons, I urge you to make the changes to the upcoming swift fox trapping season.  
Thank you  
Michelle MacKenzie

77. *From: Zoë R*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] To the Montana Wildlife Commission*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:22:03 PM*

We need to be protecting the Swift Fox. not killing them. Please, the right thing to do is to CLOSE the trapping season on Swift Fox.  
Thank you.

78. *From: William H Smith*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 12:09:29 PM*

Can you provide any logical scientific evidence to continue trapping the Swift Fox.  
Everyone (and every creature) loses when science and wildlife management become politicized.  
End this nonsense!  
William H Smith  
12604 Lower Monterey Circle  
Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214  
717-860-6912  
Sent from my iPhone

79. *From: Becky Stone*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] End the trapping of the Swift Fox in Montana*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:56:37 AM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission -  
I am writing to you today to urge you to end the trapping of swift fox and close its trapping season.  
In other words, reduce the quota allowed from 10 to 0 and issue a swift fox trapping moratorium to help save the swift fox!  
Please do the right thing.  
Sincerely,  
Becky Stone

80. *From: Jarilynn Ward*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop this cruel trapping save the swift fox and all the animals caught in them! It's so painful !*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:45:36 AM*

81. *From: Lisa Robertson*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Cc: Susan Eriksen*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Protection and Preservation*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:44:45 AM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission:

Wyoming Untrapped would like to urge you to:

- . End trapping of the swift fox, and to close the swift fox trapping season.
- . Issue a swift fox trapping moratorium to help save the swift fox.
- . At the least, reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

Trapping of swift fox in Wyoming is not allowed. There is no trapping season. Also, 50 of Wyoming swift fox are being provided to Montana for reintroduction. What will be their fate under this current trapping allowance?

It appears that public comment has been overwhelmingly in favor of a ban on swift fox trapping and hunting. This trend will continue to shift in the future as we work through the current challenging times, and, as the public desires and expectations are changing to value our wildlife on our public landscapes.

As shared by our friend and partner, Trap Free Montana Public Lands:

***Unfortunately, from the \*best available science for the swift fox in Montana:***

*The north-central swift fox population appears stable but population expansion seems to have stalled.*

*Adult survivorship is lower.*

*They do not appear reproducing to the extent necessary for recolonization.*

*The swift fox in the southeastern portion of Montana are not reproducing and are not staying.*

*There is still a ~350 km gap in distribution to fox populations in south-eastern Montana (MTFWP, 2019 [[nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com)]).*

*The southeastern Montana swift foxes are separated from Wyoming groups by about 180 miles, more than three times the length of long-distance dispersal by swift foxes.*

*Juveniles disperse the shorter of the average distances from within Montana reintroduced populations.*

*Connectedness between multiple populations is important to rescue rare populations from becoming extinct as well as for the persistent viability of the overall population.*

*Swift fox in Montana have larger home ranges and smaller litter sizes than other populations in the U.S.*

*Swift fox face many obstacles to their recovery in Montana.*

*A fragmented landscape places obstacles in the path of swift fox expansion in Montana.*

*An increase in agriculture and the disappearance of the native prairies are threats to the swift fox population.*

*A review suggests that drought in combination with other limiting factors could threaten swift fox populations.*

*Scientists claim we are not in the throws of climate change; that we are in a climate crisis.*

*Experts say we are in the 6th mass extinction. This time due to humans.*

***The best available science reinforces the need to STOP Trapping Swift Fox!***

***Trapping is a known cause of mortality to swift fox that can easily and quickly cease.*** Trapped individuals are not surplus, mortality replacements. The evidence shows the trapped individuals are generally the healthiest. They quite likely are the very ones especially needed. The smaller and more isolated the population the more significant each member is to the genetics, vitality and sustainability of the species. Swift fox males are known to abandon the dependent litter after their mate is killed. Thus, the loss of one can be far greater! At least 100 swift fox have been trapped and killed during Montana's swift fox trapping season from 2010 – 2019.

*FWP shows another 7 recorded dead from incidental trapping. Swift fox are also "mistakenly" shot. Why do the whims of less than a handful of trappers in Montana supersede the dire needs of the swift fox and the will of Montanans? Recent public comment to the Wildlife Commission were 40:1 urging the ending of a swift fox trapping season.*

*Lastly, in regards to the FWP excuse that they are getting trapped anyways, the research shows modifications to leghold traps were 100% effective at avoiding captures of swift fox and 94% effective at trapping coyotes. There are no excuses!*

Thank you for your consideration of the best available science and the shifting trend to preserve and protect our swift fox, trap-free.

Regards,

Lisa Robertson

President/Wyoming Untrapped

Lisa Robertson | President/Co-Founder

307-690-9528 | [info@wyominguntrapped.org](mailto:info@wyominguntrapped.org)

82. *From: Sheila Lindquist Whitlow*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please ban the indiscriminate trapping of swift fox*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:34:16 AM*

Please ban the awful trapping of animals, especially the Swift Fox. This trapping is barbaric and indiscriminate.

During the widespread trapping, poisoning, shooting, campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969.

Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

After returning to the state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap.

The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in the state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10. PLEASE LOWER THE QUOTA TO ZERO.

From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak.

The swift fox requires large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion.

They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless at a maximum of \$7. This is not any addition to the economy, rather it removes a rodent controlling force.

From the best available science, the basis in which the swift fox was removed from the ESA candidate list in 2001 are vastly different from today.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Sheila Lindquist

559-741-3295

83. *From: Cathy McPeck*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Close forever trapping season on Swift fox*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:31:22 AM*

This is barbaric and totally not necessary in today's world. Wake up and save our wildlife from the greed, ego, and

stupidity. Help to protect and preserve our planet. Do you have a conscience?

Please do the right thing and don't be guided by ignorance

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

84. *From: Brittany Sims*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] stop trapping the swift fox*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:28:27 AM*

STOP TRAPPING THE SWIFT FOX!

Im urging you to end the trapping of the swift fox!

Close the swift fox trapping season!

Reduce the quota from 10 to 0!

Issue a swift fox trapping moratorium to help save the swift fox!

Please, do what's right!

85. *From: info@selkophoto.com*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] stop trapping*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 11:25:19 AM*

PLEASE stop the trapping of the swift fox and reduce the quota to 0.

Thank you.

Jonathan Selkowitz

307-690-7366

86. *From: Susan Elias*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Moratorium*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:57:11 AM*

To whom it may concern:

Stop the Trapping of Swift Fox, Close the Season!

Thank you!

Susan Elias.

87. *From: Leslie Colley*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:50:49 AM*

Dear Chairman Colton and Commission Members,

I am writing to ask that you put a stop to the trapping of the swift fox in Montana by reducing the quota from ten to zero. This small, iconic animal that represents the wild, wide open

beauty of your state has been persecuted to near extinction and deserves a chance to make a living, raise its young, be a part of Montana's wildlife diversity and landscape.

The swift fox is a beneficial animal - as are all fox species - and the pelt of the swift fox has little or no monetary value. What possible justification is there for continuing to trap these animals? I urge you Gentlemen to take this one small, but meaningful step and do what you can to protect the rare and iconic swift fox for now and for future generations. Thank you for your time.

sincerely,  
Leslie Colley

88. *From: CJ ROLPHE <cjrolphe@gmail.com>*  
*Sent on: Thursday, July 16, 2020 1:49:03 PM*  
*To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwild@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping*

It is TIME for TRAPPING TO END in this state! There is NO LOGICAL REASON to be trapping ANYTHING...let alone a Swift Fox for sport (or anything else) and I and others like me that believe TRAPPING IS TORTURE hereby request that you END TRAPPING IN THE STATE OF MONTANA NOW!!!!

89. *From: Krys McConville <mikla\_2000@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 4:44 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] BAN TRAPPING!!!!*

1. CLOSE the TRAPPING of SWIFT FOX.  
This is based on the most recent and best available science and to avoid listing under the ESA.
2. Reduce the swift fox quota from 10 to 0.
3. Mandatory 24 hr/daily trap checks.
4. Close the recreational trapping of beaver.
5. Trap setbacks for ALL public roads.
6. 150' trap setbacks on public roads for consistency with regulations.
7. Posting and establishing of trap setbacks near waterways.
8. Highlight the reporting requirement change in the Furbearer Regulations.

PLEASE have some humanity, compassion, empathy & sympathy!!!! These animals feel pain just like we do!  
Thank you,  
Krys McConville

90. *From: Penny Friend <penifriend@live.com>*  
*Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 2:32 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

1. CLOSE the TRAPPING of SWIFT FOX.  
This is based on the most recent and best available science and to avoid listing under the ESA.
2. Reduce the swift fox quota from 10 to 0.
3. Mandatory 24 hr/daily trap checks.
4. Close the recreational trapping of beaver.

5. Trap setbacks for ALL public roads.
6. 150' trap setbacks on public roads for consistency with regulations.
7. Posting and establishing of trap setbacks near waterways
8. Highlight the reporting requirement change in the Furbearer Regulations.

91. *From: Rusty Krame <idahotrapguy@hotmail.com>*  
*Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 11:28 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trail Setbacks for traps*

Dear Commission and Director,

I urge you to not make any rash judgements on trail setbacks or swift fox seasons. The anti-trappers of Montana are a very small but very loud group. They put things in under the guise of "pet and child safety" and "endangering the swift fox population". Please see past these covers. These anti groups will not be happy with a few more trail setbacks and shortening swift fox season. They will only be happy when all trapping is ended in Montana.

Trapping is a vital and essential tool to manage animals in Montana, especially wolves, coyotes, and beaver. I urge you to not make snap decisions and work with the Montana Trappers Association to make a compromise before you just make drastic changes.

Thank you

Rusty Kramer

Idaho Trappers Association President

208-870-3217

92. *From: Patricia Stock*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Swift Fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:17:14 AM*

Good morning.

I was just reading about the Swift Fox that you let be trapped to the point of extinction for the 2nd time.

I don't understand how a few trappers joy in killing outweigh the biggest percentage against trapping.

Trapping is a barbaric and cruel act. The animals suffer for days on end just to appease trappers. I don't call this

humane at all.

This needs to stop. Killing of our wildlife needs to stop. The ecosystem is so out of wack because of killing the

wildlife that maintains it.

It's about time you listened to the non hunters. Stop trapping of the Swift Fox

Sincerely

Pat Stock

Sent from my iPad

93. *From: Mary Flanagan*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ban Trapping of Swift Fox*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:16:55 AM*

To Whom It May Concern:

Instead of expanding the trapping season of the Swift Fox in Montana, I urge you to ban it altogether. Not only is

this not sport, it is cruel and it is unnecessary.

The Swift Fox population in Montana is small—they encounter enough natural challenges to keep their numbers

within less-than-optimal ranges. The ecosystem needs them to help control rodents and insects, to remain in

balance. No ‘help’ from man is needed.

If the reason for the trapping season is actually to provide sport for Montana hunters, I suggest that trapping is not

sport, and it requires no talent or skill. Trapping is the antithesis of sport. Even cross bows require the ability to aim.

Trapping is for the cruel and cowardly, those who want a kill but not the work.

Trapping is cruel in a way that hunting is not. Animals caught in traps are left to suffer terribly and either be eaten

without chance of escape or starve/dehydrate to death. A good hunter will track down wounded prey and finish the

job. Not so with trappers.

Please ban trapping of the Swift Fox!

Regards,

Mary Flanagan

[maryanthonyflanagan@icloud.com](mailto:maryanthonyflanagan@icloud.com)

94. *From: [jhmerrick@comcast.net](mailto:jhmerrick@comcast.net)*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Trapping*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:15:46 AM*

Please ban the trapping of swift fox. Actually please ban all leghold traps. They are cruel and heinous tools that cause long painful deaths. Also they don't know the difference between a dog, cat, human or any other animal. These are barbaric tools that need to be banned.

Judy Merrick

95. *From: [Scott Johnson](#)*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:49:03 AM*

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission, I urge you to stop the trapping of Swift Foxes. As you know they are having trouble across their range.

I own a ranch just across the border in Wyoming. Our states have a lot in common including lots of beautiful wildlife. I would like to see them protected in both states especially from trapping.

Swift Foxes are far more valuable as something for tourists and nature lovers to see and photograph than they are as a pelt.

Thanks, Scott Johnson

262 Frisbie Rd

Sheridan, Wyoming 82801

96. *From: [Louise Kistler](#)*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Swift Fox Trapping*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:55:36 AM*

Please stop the trapping season on the Swift Fox. It is horrific what is happening there to our Swift Foxes and not acceptable! Please stop it Now!  
I urge you all to stop this horror and thank you,  
Louise Kistler

97. *From: [Jim Wheeler](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox Quota*

*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 3:50:02 PM*

To the  
Montana Wildlife Commission  
For the love of wildlife and to stop the eradication of the Swift Fox and because wildlife has no voice or vote-  
Reduce the swift fox quota to 0.  
Issue a swift fox trapping moratorium.  
Close the trapping season on swift fox.  
Sincerely,  
Jennifer Wheeler  
740 Elm Drive  
Petaluma, CA

98. *From: [Julie Shetler](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop the killing of all animals and the Swift Fox!*

*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 2:54:35 PM*

PLEASE STOP THIS SENSELESS KILLING! How is killing the fox helping the cause for any farmer or livestock? They aren't big or strong enough to kill these big animals such as the cows, etc!  
Thank you,  
Julie Shetler

99. *From: [Elvin Childers](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping swift fox*

*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 2:08:23 PM*

This is unthinkable cruel. Imagine you being it in this horrible situation. Please ban trapping, poisoning and any attempt to harm them.

100. *From: [Carol Walters](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL]*

*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 12:41:39 PM*

*Attachments: [image.png](#)*



Stop the trapping of the swift fox.



The whole shoulder, almost half of his/her body smashed in the leg hold trap. It's hard to fathom the suffering and legally okay for days and days in MT.

The rare 5 lb, 12" high, very easy to trap, imperiled icon of the American prairies..... the swift fox, really needs your help and now! Carol Walters

Montana Wildlife Commission: stop the trapping of swift fox, reduce the quota from 10 to 0. Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox.

Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety.

Carol Walters

101. *From: Connie Burris*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Trapping Swift Fox*

*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 12:38:12 PM*

I am Insisting you Please STOP the trapping/trapping season of swift fox, reduce the quota from 10 to 0.

These tiny Fox eats rodent and insects, and has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, climate change and loss of prey.

Therefore going by science they should not be subjected to A hunt.

Trapping is A form of unnecessary mortality Their tiny pelts are deemed worthless.

Trappers only receive a price at best of \$7 the reason trappers trap these tiny animals is for their own enjoyment. Many other animal species/pets are caught in these traps injured and killed.

Therefore I am again INSISTING you CLOSE the Trapping/Trapping Season on tiny swift

fox

Mrs Conni Burris

102. *From: Lynn Clark*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox*

*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:35:58 AM*

Dear Montana Wildlife Commission,

During the wide spread trapping, poisoning, shooting campaign to kill wolves and other predators, the swift fox was

eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct by 1969. Today, despite various efforts, the rare swift fox does not appear doing near as well as expected. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed. After returning to our state 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, swift fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a swift fox trapping season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30. In Canada, swift fox remain protected and are illegal to trap. The last final estimates in Montana had the swift fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in our state. In response, FWP lowered the trapping quota in 2016 to 10. From the current swift fox data their future in Montana is bleak. The swift fox require large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of swift fox, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to Jan 15. Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the swift fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border. This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey. Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the swift fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless. After considerable research, Trap Free was able to find a price at best of \$7. We are told trappers enjoy destroying these, smaller than a domestic cat, vixens for the notoriety. Some claim to fame....I annihilated the last swift fox in Montana.....again! Why??? For What??? \$7.00???? Really? PLEASE!!!!!!  
CLOSE the Trapping Season on swift fox!  
Sent from my iPhone

103. *From: [candlekristen](#)  
To: [FWP Commission](#)  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping the swift fox  
Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:34:41 AM*

To whom it may concern,  
Please stop trapping the swift fox. Trapping is barbaric and should be illegal no matter where or what animal is caught in these heinous devices. These animals can not speak for themselves as they have no voice. So we have to speak on their behalf. Please stop trapping the swift fox and please consider the making the use of these traps illegal permanently.  
Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Kristen Nielander

104. *From: Candy Rinard*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping of Foxes*  
*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 11:21:55 AM*

I live in California and saw a post about how you trap and kill foxes in Montana. Disgusting to say the least. Your state is so beautiful but yet you have things like this going on behind the scenes. Shameful. Please stop. I would never think of visiting a state that is so cruel to wildlife.  
Candy Rinard

105. *From: Jennifer Babb*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please stop trapping of the swift fox*  
*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 10:26:52 AM*

Hello,  
I am writing to respectfully ask that you stop allowing trapping of the swift fox. Their pelts are not worth much money. Their lives however are worth much, much more! Please do not allow them to go extinct. They are a valuable part of the ecosystem.  
Thank you,  
Jen Babb

106. *From: Gregteresa Bb*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox trapping*  
*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 9:39:12 AM*

Close the Swift Fox trapping season before it's too late.  
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [[go.onelink.me](https://go.onelink.me)]

107. *From: Kim Shotola*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Cc: Kim*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox*  
*Date: Sunday, July 26, 2020 9:00:04 AM*

Please I urge you to stop trapping the swift fox. Trapping is cruel to begin with but the population is in question.

Overall the population of this species is not what it used to be. I know as I was involved in their conservation.

Please have a heart and do the right thing. Stop trapping the swift fox in Montana.

Thank you!

Kim Shotola

Kim & Allison

[https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_\\_http://www.TheLightfootWay.com\\_\\_;!!GaaboA!-34DznOiWj13i4quDOa0ACEo5-QKFkzLNrN8fQfR5SDiG91wAuBnf84Do7vYpfg\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http://www.TheLightfootWay.com__;!!GaaboA!-34DznOiWj13i4quDOa0ACEo5-QKFkzLNrN8fQfR5SDiG91wAuBnf84Do7vYpfg$)

108. *From: TehannaMichelle Monroe*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Trapping the Swift Fox*

*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 8:17:59 PM*

I'm writing today to ask the representatives this may concern to stop torturing the Swift Fox. I am familiar with some of the culture in states like MT, ID and WY. I realize that animals like coyotes, foxes and wolves are seen as vermin and a threat to livelihoods such as livestock. I'm also aware though, that ranchers receive compensation for lost cattle in events such as wolves picking off members of the herd. I do not believe that the inhumanity of trapping is acceptable for any animal to endure. It is completely cruel and unnecessary. I am not against hunting, I'm not some loon from PETA, but for God's sake, these kinds of depravity should not be legal. People that have no respect for the lives of animals should be held accountable. And again, I cannot emphasize enough, the difference between humane and often necessary or essential hunting as opposed to the slaughter of harmless or endangered animals for the sake of sport. I urge whomever this concerns to change the laws in your state and set an example. You can represent the iconic American West, support hunting and still have compassion. Thank you for your time,  
Tehanna Monroe

109. *From: lynne huntley*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] The trapping of Swift foxes in Montana*

*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 7:56:04 PM*

To Whomever is a decision maker for the trapping and hunting of native species in Montana: I am writing to you today to seriously urge you to end/close the trapping season on Swift foxes. Numbering at only 347 animals, they have never really recovered since their earlier eradication from the state to flourish and expand in their range. Even though they were reintroduced in 2000, their numbers have continued to decline. This diminutive native fox at 12" inches high and only five pounds faces many obstacles to their survival. Trapping is an unnecessary hurdle driven by the mere "thrill" of capture and kill by a small minority. I read that you reduced the quota to ten, however you are considering expanding the trapping range, therefore cancelling out any good lowering the quota will do. As it is, even a quota of ten is too many considering the shrinking of their numbers and small, once a year litters they produce. This little fox harms no one, and indeed, helps to keep the rodent population in check. These tiny mammals capture the heart of many Americans who much rather see them alive and thriving in the wild. Once again I strongly urge you to close the trapping and hunting season on Montana's Swift fox. Thank you.  
Sincerely,  
Lynne Huntley  
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone [overview.mail.yahoo.com]

110. *From: marta@martawilliams.com*

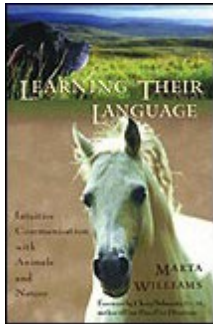
*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] stop pointless useless brutal trapping of swift fox*

*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 1:03:53 PM*

it is done purely out of sadism

Marta Williams  
Author/Biologist/Animal Communicator  
[martawilliams.com](http://martawilliams.com) [[martawilliams.com](http://martawilliams.com)]  
[martawilliamsblog.com](http://martawilliamsblog.com) [[martawilliamsblog.com](http://martawilliamsblog.com)]  
530 528 9127



This is my first book and best seller. It is a how to book and covers just about everything i know.

111. *From: Glenn & Lori Gannon*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping season*  
*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 10:07:05 AM*

Dear members of the Montana Wildlife Commission,  
I impore you to do the right thing and CLOSE the trapping season  
On swift fox right away. Please give these threatened animals  
a chance.  
Sincerely,  
Lori Gannon  
198 Rumonoski Drive  
Northbridge MA 01534

112. *From: Lee Kolb*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Foxes*  
*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 8:57:26 AM*

Hello,  
I have seen what happens with swift foxes caught in leg hold traps.  
This misery and pain inflicted on God's creatures is evil. Please end it now.  
Thanks for your attention,  
Lee Kolb  
Huntsville AL, 35803

113. *From: PORTER, LAURINDA W.*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Trapping Swift Foxes*  
*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 8:37:34 AM*

Dear Members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission:  
I am surprised that you do not know that the swift fox is nearly

extinct in Montana.

I request that you IMMEDIATELY suspend/cancel/prohibit trapping of swift foxes in Montana. You don't want to be known as the people who allowed this important mammal to become extinct. You are already known for your hatred of wolves and your ignorance of the workings of the Montana ecosystem.

Please--take a biology class. You can do it online. Learn about how all living things work together to make a functioning, healthy environment. Learn how you can stand up to greedy livestock producers and ignorant trappers and hunters who just want to kill every predator they can find. What they are doing is killing our nation's environment.

Thank you for considering my requests.

Dr Rin Porter

Bloomington, Minnesota

Frequent visitor to Montana

114. *From: CAROLE RICHMOND*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping of Swift fox and all animals*

*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:10:19 PM*

Wildlife Commission:

I'm appalled at the cruelty of leg-hold and body-gripping traps and snares, and that you commissioners allow it. Trapping should be banned. It doesn't have a single redeeming quality. It should be absolutely illegal to torture animals under any circumstance. Dogs and cats are protected by law. Why not wildlife? The victims are sentient beings, fully alive with emotions and senses, that play important roles in ecosystem health. Often, the victims aren't even the intended targets. What does it say about YOU that you allow this vile anti-life, anti-conservation behavior, when you can choose to stop it? Allowing torture makes you complicit in these heinous acts. To say that trapping isn't torture is a lie and all decent people know it. People who torture animals are criminals who don't belong in society and should never be allowed around animals or other living beings. On top of all this, rare and beautiful animals, such as the Swift Fox, as well as wolves, bobcats, coyotes, beavers, birds, and other species are killed in these torture devices. Even dogs are maimed and killed. If you don't see your job as conservation of all species, you don't belong on a wildlife commission!

Leg-hold traps are banned in over 85 countries. The majority of Americans despise trapping. Stand with people who love wildlife, instead of people who love to kill wildlife, and ban trapping NOW. Thank you.

Carole Richmond

3003 Langridge Loop NW

Olympia, WA 98502

PS: Though I live in WA, I have family that lives in Montana and I visit often.

115. *From: S Schroeder*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Regulations*

*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 8:21:33 PM*

I am writing to you today about trapping and the Swift Fox. The Swift Fox was eradicated in Montana and declared locally extinct. Today, there are a very few of them in the state. The rare swift fox does not appear doing well at all. They are not expanding, surviving, reproducing or remaining as anticipated, as hoped, as needed.

After returning to Montana some 20 years ago, from the reintroductions in Canada, Swift Fox reached an estimated high of over 500 in 2005 in Montana but never to be seen again. At the request of Montana trappers a Swift Fox trapping season began in 2010 with a quota of 20, then a few years later, 30.

In Canada, Swift Fox remain protected and are illegal to trap. We should follow suit. I personally think ALL trapping should be banned, but that's another letter.

The last final estimates in Montana had the Swift Fox down 33% in 2015 from the previous census and at only 347 remaining in our state.

From the current Swift Fox data, their future in Montana is bleak.

The Swift Fox require large home ranges in Montana and give birth to only one small litter a year. They disperse in the fall and just prior to breeding which starts in December. Montana's trapping season starts Nov 1 and runs until March 1st. Rather than ending the trapping of Swift Fox and protecting the species, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has proposed changing the closing date to Jan 15. Montana FWP has also proposed for the 2020 season to increase the Swift Fox trapping region East to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and North to the Canadian border. This is irresponsible.

This little, rodent and insect eating, fox has multiple obstacles to recovery and expansion. They are negatively impacted by severe winters, drought, predation, vehicles, agriculture, topography, climate change and loss of prey.

Trapping is one form of unnecessary mortality we can quickly and easily end and must in order to help the Swift Fox. Their pelts are deemed worthless.

I am writing to URGE you to stop allowing any trapping of the Swift Fox at all. It's time to protect this endangered species.

S. Schroeder

Wildlife Advocate and conservationist

116. *From: [shindenmyojo Hunt](#)*  
*To: [FWP Commission](#)*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Urgent request*  
*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 6:37:19 PM*

Dear Sirs,

Please stop trapping the swift fox. Please, please stop.

Thank you,

Myphon Hunt

117. *From: [lorriereut@aol.com](mailto:lorriereut@aol.com)*  
*To: [FWP Commission](#)*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*  
*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 6:36:15 PM*

Please stop all trapping, especially of the tiny Swift Fox.

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

Get the new AOL app: [mail.mobile.aol.com](http://mail.mobile.aol.com) [[mail.mobile.aol.com](http://mail.mobile.aol.com)]

118. *From: [Kelleen Farrell](#)*  
*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox*

*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 4:17:26 PM*

Close the trapping season on the Swift Fox. Hell, close trapping all together. It is cruel and stupid.

--

Kelleen Farrell, M.A. Math Education

119. *From: Kathleen Engstrom <dyggur@gmail.com>*

*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:52 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox*

Hello

Please don't allow trapping of the swift fox. Most people don't want animals trapped (a cruel and unnecessary practice); it's a very few number of people who want trapping legal.

Let's become thoughtful, humane humans and end trapping. One day we will look back in history and be ashamed of our cruelty.

Sincerely

Kathy Engstrom

Stevensville, MT

406-531-8640

"Be the sky and the clouds that create the rain, not the gutter that carries it to the drain"—Rumi

120. *From: Renee DeMartin <rdemartin.photo.design@gmail.com>*

*Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 7:06 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift Fox/Beaver*

CLOSE THE TRAPPING OF SWIFT FOX AND CLOSE THE RECREATIONAL TRAPPING OF BEAVERS.

Thanks,

--

[Renee DeMartin](#)

121. *From: Sue Ann Stephenson-Love <sueannlove@gmail.com>*

*Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 1:35 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request to Our Commissioners Regarding the Trapping of Swift Foxes and Beavers*

Dear Commissioners:

I have learned that there are trapping proposals coming before you regarding the above animals. I am writing to urge you to close trapping for swift foxes completely. The need for this is apparent based on credible available data, and halting trapping at this time could well prevent the swift fox from being listed under the ESA.



Additionally, I ask that you close any recreational trapping of beaver as they are a necessary ingredient to Montana's healthy streams and waterways.

Sincerely,  
Sue Ann Stephenson-Love  
Great Falls, MT. 59405

122. *From: mary shabbott <mshabbott@sbcglobal.net>*  
*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] End the slaughter*

CLOSE the trapping of swift fox before this species is wiped out.  
Mary Shabbott

123. *From: Ibolya Ivan*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop the trapping season on swift fox in Montana*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:50:05 PM*

It is barbaric and inhuman.. those animals are suffering a great pain, some of them chewing up their own limbs..

Please Stop

Sent from my iPhone

124. *From: <stephen@bvconservation.org>*  
*Sent on: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:00:33 PM*  
*To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] swift fox comments*  
*Attachments: Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks.docx-swift fox.docx (77.08 KB)*

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Stephen Capra  
Executive Director  
Footloose Montana  
406-370-3028



promoting trap-free public lands for people, pets & wildlife

Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks  
2668 Broadway Ave.  
Helena, MT 59602

7/27/2020

### **Comments to Fish, Wildlife and Parks Regarding Swift Fox**

Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

The swift fox is a very small fox weighing just 4-6 pounds. It once covered the Western grasslands across the US and Canada. Yet, like so many things related to trapping it was completely extirpated from Canada and wiped out of much of its U.S. range. Today despite recovery efforts by states and Providences, the swift fox has only returned to 40% of its historic range.

This species was not brought back from the brink of extinction for the purpose of trapping, but rather for enhancing the ecosystem that it helps regulate. This species is monogamous and breeds only one time a year, females not till their second year, making the trapping of this species particularly cruel and impactful to their long-term survival.

The proposal by the department weighs a shorten season with an expanded range. Yet, the most striking aspect of the request is the admittance that this proposal is based on no real science. In recent years the counts of swift fox have evolved by using different means of counting foxes and now the idea is that we will expand the trapping area because it makes more sense for a boundary is, on its face, baseless. Once again it appears the agency is working from a lack of clear, concise science to allow the killing of this "species of concern" in our state.

While the department appears to balance this proposition by shortening the season to allow for the birth of new animals, the reasoning appears to be so they can be trapped in the coming years.

Footloose Montana continues to ask the question- What is the purpose of allowing the trapping of a species that was almost eliminated and now is only up to 40% of its historic range? Why kill a species that seems perfectly fit to support the operations of livestock interests? Why does the agency seem so intent on this action when we have seen the impacts from earlier trapping of this species and the impacts it has had?

Another question is what are trappers getting out of killing an animal the size of a house cat? Not money; no this is simply a cruel, outdated practice that is kept alive by the agency allowing the trapping of this small, curious and vulnerable animal. This is not a game; it is the life and death of a species.

Footloose Montana strongly believes that the quota on swift fox should go from 10 to 0. We believe that there should be no trapping season for the swift fox until this species recovers or it is likely to be placed on the ESA again. While the shortening of the season may help this species, it cannot be helped with a sustained and expanded trapping range that is not based on science, but on boundaries placed on a map.

Trapping is not a birth right, nor is it enshrined in the constitution. The majority of public land owners do not want trapping on our public lands. The time has come for the agency to take with far more seriousness the concerns that are expressed related to trapping. In that vein, the agency would be wise to end the trapping of swift fox until such time as there is convincing science and public sentiment to support such a lethal action.

Sincerely,

Stephen Capra

Executive Director  
Footloose Montana  
Stephen@footloosemontana.org

*125. From: info@tfmpl.org <info@tfmpl.org>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 8:14 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Swift fox, beaver, public comment*

Resending as I had sent the wrong one, my apologies.

KC

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Swift fox, beaver, public comment

From: <[info@tfmpl.org](mailto:info@tfmpl.org)>

Date: Tue, July 28, 2020 3:54 pm

To: "Wildlife Commissioners" <[fwcomm@mt.gov](mailto:fwcomm@mt.gov)>

Commissioners, Director,

Please find attached our public comment re the **swift fox** trapping proposals.

Also again now is the time to protect **beaver**. We are in a climate crisis and many species are dependent on beaver, including us! The time is now to end the recreational trapping of beaver. Non-lethal methods are showing to be cost effective and long standing. Supporting beaver supports our landscape, our water resources, big game browse, fire mitigation, fisheries, agriculture, habitat, wildlife including endangered species.

Thank you,

KC York

On behalf of TFMPL board of directors

Promoting ethics, the best available science & responsible stewardship for trapping reform. We partner with our sister organization, Trap Free Montana, a 501-c3, educational charitable organization.

[Trap Free Montana Public Lands \[tfmpl.org\]](http://www.tfmpl.org), Inc.

PO Box 1347

Hamilton, Montana 59840

406-218-1170

[www.tfmpl.org](http://www.tfmpl.org) [[tfmpl.org](http://www.tfmpl.org)]

Dear Chairman Colton, Commissioners, Director Williams,

7/28/20

Re: Swift fox

FWP has presented you with 2 trapping proposals in the 2020 Furbearer Trapping proposals regarding swift fox.

Since 2016, when the swift fox quota was reduced from 30 to 10, we have been asking for a 0 quota, for a **close on the swift fox trapping season, in order to fully support their recovery and recolonization.**

We raised the issue further and louder, in 2018, with FWP and the Commission with the Montana Swift Fox Conservation Strategy proposal. From the last international census, 2014-2015, the preliminary findings were only an estimated 175 swift fox, a 67% decrease, in north-central Montana.

FWP advised us that there was a significant decline, i.e. 33%, from the 2005-2006 census of 523, but that the final estimates were 347 swift fox. The severe winter of 2010/2011 was assigned much the blame for the swift fox decline. However, southern Alberta and Saskatchewan had a variety of severe winter storms over the same time periods. Both regions have since had severe winters.

Our concerns for the plight of the swift fox has not waned. They have increased given the available scientific findings since our 2018 alarm cries.

As we waited in earnest, hoping for a trapping season closure, the Montana Swift Fox Conservation Strategy plan was postponed until 2019 in which the Commission then approved the plan. Within it:

## **V1. Swift Fox Harvest Management**

**The basis for FWP recommending a limited harvest season for swift fox will be swift fox population status, public support, incidental take, and trapper interest.**

Taking a closer look at these parameters:

### **1. Swift fox population status. The most important basis!**

- The swift fox population in north-central Montana is reported as stable but stagnant.
- Likely not producing enough individuals to expand.
- Lower adult survival rate.
- Large gap between swift fox populations.
- The swift fox in southeastern Montana are not staying and not reproducing.

942 swift fox were reintroduced into south Alberta and Saskatchewan at a cost of roughly \$5,000,000, 1983-1997. Almost 200 swift fox were released on to two Native American Reservations in Montana, i.e. 123 on to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, 1998-2002 and 60 on to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, 2006-2010.

Reintroductions in the U.S. ranged from \$950 - \$5300 per swift fox.

By 2000-2001, the swift fox in north-central Montana were estimated at 221. By the 2004-2005 international census, 523. A number we have yet to see since. We have not yet received the 2018 population findings we have requested. However, we have obtained sufficient findings for cause for alarm.

Swift foxes have since increased and expanded their range into northern Montana (USA), but have experienced a population decline and stall in recolonization over the past 10 years (Butler 2020).

After analyzing the photos, the team estimated their reproductive output and survival. "Based on the fact that we have low adult survival and high juvenile survival, the population is stable (Butler 2020)

Swift foxes in southeastern Montana were separated from Wyoming groups by about 180 miles, more than three times the length of a long-distance dispersal by swift foxes; however, population expansion appears to have stalled since that time and there still is a ~350 km gap in distribution to fox populations in south-eastern Montana (Butler et al ., 2020)

It is therefore unlikely that any corridor could provide adequate connectivity between the populations, and the reintroduction of swift foxes into the corridor may be required to enhance other conservation strategies (Alexander 2016).

In the past five years there have been more sightings and camera trap events in southeastern Montana, but they are not staying and they are not reproducing. (Bly 2018).

The discussion section from the study "Life on the edge: habitat fragmentation limits expansion of a restored carnivore", published in June 2020, reads.

*"Our study suggests that swift foxes at the edge of their range in north-eastern Montana have relatively low survivorship compared to previous studies of this population that were conducted during the establishment phase post-reintroduction or establishment.*

*Adult survival during our 2-year study was lower than two previous estimates from the Canada-Montana population that were calculated during the growth phase of the population following reintroduction that occurred >20 years previous (Zimmerman, **1998**; Moehrensclager, **2000**), and that of a recently established population of foxes on the Blackfeet Reservation in western Montana (Table **3**; Ausband & Foresman, **2007b**).*

*Our study indicates that the population of swift foxes in north-eastern Montana is currently stable, but likely not producing enough individuals to successfully expand southward into unoccupied habitat that is suitable based on previous habitat assessments (Alexander et al ., **2016**; Butler, **2019**)*

*From a species restoration or recovery perspective, **in order for a population to expand its range, the current population needs to produce a sufficient number of 'surplus' dispersing individuals** (Lubina & Levin, **1988**). Thus, the stable growth rate we observed suggests that the population is likely not acting as a source population for the region; and could explain why despite there being suitable habitat in the gap between populations (Alexander et al ., **2016**; Butler, **2019**), areas south of our study area remain unoccupied."*

This study also discussed the additional challenges for the swift fox. "In our study area, swift foxes had some of the largest home ranges recorded for the species which may have been due to low prey abundance. Two winters of extreme snowfall and a

summer of record low precipitation (NWS Glasgow MT, 2018, 2019). The cause of the low number of females reproducing might be due to low prey abundance. Agricultural development along the Milk River at the southern extent of our population might be a barrier to recolonization both behaviorally in terms of movement, as well as demographically in terms of reduced survival. In addition, genetic studies of the reintroduced population indicate that extensive croplands may be a barrier to dispersal movement, so much so that it can cause geographic and genetic structure.”

Differences in management across jurisdictions may not impact the survival of populations significantly, but that will depend on species connectivity (Cullingham, 2019).

The swift fox is listed as a species of concern in Montana and rightfully so.

## **2. Public support**

In section V1 of the Montana Swift Fox Conservation Strategy, item 5. Contacts made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con). For the 2018 swift fox proposal 40:1 expressed opposition to trapping them. FWP postponed the Commissioner’s vote scheduled for the Aug 2018 meeting with an explanation to us at Trap Free from Mr. McDonald, “Because of some substantive comments that came in at the last minute that require thoughtful conservation we are delaying final adoption.” This gave us hope the swift fox would receive a reprieve that year. That didn’t happen and the trapping season and quota for swift fox remained as status quo. Despite our email exchanges with FWP regarding the swift fox since 2018 and our rather well-known presence, or at least our ongoing communicated interest, TFMPL was never contacted regarding the swift fox 2020 proposals. In the proposal, FWP writes that given Covid-19, no trapper meetings were held, however contacts were made with the Montana Trapper Association (MTA) vice president East and “efforts were made by the furbearer coordinator to ensure changes were known by the MTA.”

## **3. Incidental take**

FWP shows 7 swift fox from incidental trapping 2010-2019.

1 swift fox reported incidentally caught in 2008 and none in 2009.

Swift fox are subjected to the risk of incidental catch year-round since coyotes are completely unregulated and can be trapped unlimited year-round.

Studies have shown adjusting the pan tension on modified #3 Victor soft catch traps achieved a capture rate of 94% for coyotes and an exclusion rate of 100% for swift fox.

Incidental take including outside the trapping boundary or outside the trapping season do not count against the quota or in the following year. Why not?

#### 4. **Trapper interest**

At least 100 swift fox have been reported trapped and killed during Montana's swift fox trapping season from 2010 – 2019. FWP harvest reports indicate no more than a handful are trapping swift fox. In writings, FWP says trapping is market driven. There is no market for swift fox pelts. After considerable searching, we were able to finally find a price of \$7, at least at one time. We were told Montana trappers want to trap swift fox for the notoriety.

In Canada, swift fox remain protected. They cannot be trapped.

Genetics of a reintroduced swift fox population highlights the need for integrated conservation between neighboring countries: our results regarding large dispersal distances suggest that any fox could theoretically have young that disperse to the neighbouring country; as such, further restrictions to poison-use or fur harvest should be considered, until the population reaches viable levels. Using population genetics we have been able to understand the scale of demographic processes, which has yielded management-level insights for the swift fox. Beyond this system, our approach can help provide the information needed to motivate the alignment of protective legislation across borders for other species of conservation concern (Cunningham 2019).

A fragmented landscape places obstacles in the path of swift fox expansion in Montana. The Montana population remains stable, according to recent research, but it's blocked in on all sides by agriculture (Butler 2020).

In response to our prior concerns we were told, swift fox numbers were plugged into a Population Viability Analysis (PVA) "to inform harvest regulations." Based on the findings, the conclusion was the probability of extinction was zero over the next 100 years.

However, wildlife are far more than numbers plugged into a model. They do not operate in a vacuum. For example, the swift fox females dominate the social structure. Mates pair up for life. In the loss of a mate, the males will disperse whereas the females will not. 66% of the reported trappings in 8 recent seasons in Montana were males. The average age of trapped individuals was 1.6 years. However, in the more recent years, over 80% trapped are juveniles. These are the ones who primarily disperse. Aside from mortality due to trapping, shooting, poisons, and from vehicles, the little swift fox are found to be negatively impacted further by agriculture, topography, predation, drought, severe winters, loss of prey, and climate



change. An example is the Milk river serves as an obstacle to dispersal. The research from 2018 onwards is clear that the future is not looking anywhere as promising as FWP would have lead one to believe, or as we all would have hoped.

**FWP, for the 2020 swift fox trapping proposed, (1)** extend the eastern trapping boundary to abut the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and north to the Canadian border. FWP writes that the Fort Peck Reservation has no concern. What is absent in the proposal are the findings the swift fox on the reservation appear basically gone. A recent report also had this to say, "The recent decrease in swift fox abundance (Moehrensclager & Moehrensclager, [2018](#)), coupled with our finding that swift fox dispersal is frequent across the international border, implies that demographic recovery in one country is going to be particularly sensitive to management actions in the other country. This highlights the need for coordinated management on a small scale. With swift foxes having the highest level of protection in Canada, and no federal protection in the USA."

**(2)** closing the swift fox trapping on January 15th instead of March 1st. Yet, swift fox are already into their breeding season prior to that date. The quota of 10 often results in the season closing prior to January 15th. This appears somewhat of a smokescreen and is disingenuous to the necessary changes indicated for the swift fox recovery goals and objectives.

**What ever became of the ESA listing?** Swift fox were deemed warranted for protections under the ESA in 1995. Due to their population increase and expansion they were removed from candidacy in 2001. The USFWS denied an intent to sue in 2005 on the basis:

Indicators were the swift fox was *stabilized or increasing and on historic ranges, reintroductions were underway, and "declining trends have not been evident in recent decades."* And that, *"there is adequate information available to conclude the swift fox is more abundant and is distributed more widely and is more flexible in its habitat requirements than previously thought."*

The indicators no longer hold up and have changed considerably. From various accounts we are headed again towards the swift fox being listed.

**Trapping is one known cause of mortality to swift fox that can easily and quickly cease.** Trapped individuals are not surplus, mortality replacements. The evidence shows the trapped individuals are generally the healthiest. They quite likely are the very ones especially needed. The smaller and more isolated the population the more significant each member is to the genetics, vitality and sustainability of the species.

Experts say we are not in a climate change, we are in a climate crisis. This will further impact the little swift fox. Scientists report we are in the 6<sup>th</sup> mass extinction and this time because of humans. The time is now to protect, preserve and conserve wildlife such as the swift fox. The consequences of trapping are too great.

Please ask yourself, is it biologically, ethically, financially, responsible to continue a trapping season on swift fox? Is it really worth it?

Thank you,

KC York

Trap Free Montana Public Lands/President

On behalf of our board of directors



#### References.

Alexander, 2016 Use of least-cost path analysis to identify potential movement corridors of swift foxes in Montana

Bly, Kristy 2020 Swift foxes considered locally extinct for decades are making a comeback.

Butler, A.R. 2019 Behavioral and Population Ecology of Swift Foxes in Northeastern Montana.

Butler, 2020 Small canids can't outfox habitat fragmentation | THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

[Butler](#), A. R. 2020 Life on the edge: habitat fragmentation limits expansion of a restored carnivore [A. R. Butler](#), [K. L. S. Bly](#), [H. Harris](#), [R. M. Inman](#), [A. Moehrenschrager](#), [D. Schwalm](#), [D. S. Jachowski](#) First published: 18 June 2020

Cullingham, C. I. 2019 Genetics of a reintroduced swift fox population highlights the need for integrated conservation between neighbouring countries.

Additional references are available upon request.

## **SETBACK COMMENTS**

126. *To:FWP Wildlife; Logan Brower <lbrower@yahoo.com>; Pat Byorth ([fwpdistrict2@gmail.com](mailto:fwpdistrict2@gmail.com)); Rich Stuker <rstuker@itstriangle.com>; Shane Colton <scolton@yellowstonelaw.com>; Tim Aldrich ([Cartim8@gmail.com](mailto:Cartim8@gmail.com));*

Per phone call:

Bertram Wustner  
406-273-7500  
[Wustber44@gmail.com](mailto:Wustber44@gmail.com)

For existing trapping setbacks, He is opposed to any new or additional setback rules proposed by non-consumptive users.

127. *From: Michael Tvardzik <mtvardzik@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 7:52 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No setback changes please*

Hello,

I am a trapper that lives and works in Montana. I have a vested interest in this beautiful state and am proud of its heritage and history. Trapping is a part of Montana just like mining and logging.

With that being said I hears this time around the anti groups with most members out of state are trying to push setbacks for traps farther into the forest. Again. This is unnecessary.

If you look at all instances with dogs being caught. The fatal ones are mostly because of illegal sets or carelessness of the pet owners. This is all about accountability. Time and time again I see dogs running wild in the forest. Some recreating, but there are times where I see them chasing wildlife (deer, elk, turkeys). I believe setbacks are far enough. Idaho has setbacks of 10ft and don't have as many incidental pet catches with a comparable population of people.

I thought long and hard about it. And I've come to the conclusion it's about respect. Respect for the multi use land and respect for others recreating on the land. Trappers need to use good judgment when placing sets. And non trappers need to use good judgment when going through the forest. It's about getting along. This can be accomplished with proper education on both sides. Groups like Footloose are just fear mongering and push their agenda with donations from out of state residents. They have low support in Montana because Montanans are logical thinking people. They

rely on support from coastal states to keep the machine moving.

I've come across multiple hunters who have let their dogs loose in the woods and they got caught in a trap. No issues with the animals and the hunter wasn't upset. Just a surprising incident because they understand trapping is out there. We do a great part in managing furbearers so FWP and taxpayers don't have to pay a government official to trap nuisance animals. And I'm honored to be able to.

Thank you for your support to trappers and I hope my children can continue on with this. It's not just a hobby, it's a lifestyle. I have the utmost respect for all animals on the land and trapping has brought me closer to feeling one with the land. The education I've received by tracking, setting traps and processing animals is invaluable. You can't learn this from school. You learn it by being out there and respecting the land.

Thank you

Michael Tvardzik

128. NO setbacks! The system has worked for a long time with minimal problems. The trapping enthusiasts in Montana deserve a stronger voice than the foreign interests that inundate the Commission. Montana residents should be the ONLY people who are allowed to comment on FWP rules and regulations. If you are unaware of the reality of trapping wolves, I can understand your mistakenly wanting traps setback away from roads and trails, because you do not realize how difficult it is to draw a wolf away from said path. Bob

*Robert Pierson Trout Creek, MT*

129. *From: Tom Radandt <tomradandt0@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 11:39 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trap setback discussions*

I am opposed to any changes in trap setback regulations. This is a non-issue fabricated to limit our opportunities. If dogs were being caught in traps to any extent, we would hear about.

Do not make any changes to current setback regulations.

Tom Radandt

130. *From: redscoening <redscoening@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 12:54 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Set backs*

I am against all and any set backs on excepted road and trails.  
Unneeded in my opinion  
Red schoening

131. *From: Dusty Luedtke <dustytinner@gmail.com>*  
*Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 8:21 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

23; Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.  
&#61623; Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.  
&#61623; That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.  
&#61623; The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be

132. *From: Jay Sheffield <jaysheffield@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:52 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

As an actual real live MONTANA resident and long time licensed trapper, I absolutely oppose any further changes to "setback" distances or regulations.

Jay Sheffield  
7589 Hutton Dr.  
Libby, MT 59923

133. *From: Tater McKay <tater.mckay@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:58 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Setbacks*

To the members of the fish and wildlife commission, It has come to my attention that the commission is going to consider additional setbacks on roads pertaining to trapping. I would like to ask that the commission please not make any decision on this without allowing the landowners and trappers to have their voices heard. The August commission meeting does not allow enough time for this to happen.

Thank you for your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely, Todd McKay  
Dillon, MT

Sent from my iPhone

134. *From: David Hastings <davechastings@gmail.com>  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 11:15 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commission considerations of trapping setbacks*

MFWP--

The Fur Takers of America would emphatically encourage you NOT to take action on the proposed setback rules. This topic is complicated and the emotionally charged value group that is pushing for these additional setbacks are taking advantage of the Covid-19 restrictions on public meetings, and the opportunities for public input.

I am sure that the advocacy groups who are pushing this have processes in place to make it appear that there is a huge groundswell of public support...it is a common rhetorical tactic. Don't circumvent public input on this, or be swayed by the well funded, passionate groups that are pushing a partisan advocacy idea rather than a clear effort for "public good" or "wildlife management benefit."

In fact, once the details are clear, there is a huge national support for Best Management Practices for Trapping in the US. For example, the International Organization for Standardization helped develop the testing protocol and welfare criteria used during BMP development to evaluate trapping devices. Leading wildlife veterinarians and wildlife biologists led this effort within ISO. Traps used today are not the "barbaric devices" the opposition would lead you to believe.

Here is some data to consider:

The United States and Canada have conducted the most extensive scientific testing of traps in the world to develop Best Management Practices for Trapping (BMPs), a program that ensures that traps used to capture wildlife are humane, efficient, safe, and selective.

During this project, various designs of traps were set to capture a target species over 1/2 million times. No threatened or endangered species were caught during this extensive trap testing. 99.95% of the time, no domestic dogs or cats were captured; the few that were captured were released unharmed.

Recent National surveys have shown that the vast majority of traps (78% based on survey) used in the United States today are the same designs that were determined to be the most selective. Trappers have enthusiastically adopted the designs and methods that maximize animal welfare and selectivity.

It would be an "end around" of the facts to have any motion made on trapping setbacks at your meeting, particularly if you do so without public comment.

You have, as the State of Montana and the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, hired experts on this subject. These experts are far more able to provide guidance on the particulars of this, or any other wildlife management policy, than the "loud voice in the room." To circumvent public input, and to allow a passionate advocacy group to steamroll the situation would be comparable to telling the State Department of Roads that they must use blue asphalt on all highways because folks think it is more attractive. The consequences of NOT allowing for public input, NOT using direct input from field experts, and NOT collecting the data are dire.

Dave Hastings, President  
Fur Takers of America

135. *From: PAMELA KLOOTE <dmt85@blackfoot.net>*

*Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 11:36 AM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping set backs*

I ask that no motions be made for a trapping set back at the August meeting. There has to be some discussion, some places where these set backs would be, both private and public property etc. must be discussed and in December with all this information made public and discussed then vote on it. Thankyou

John T. Kloote

Potomac, MT. 59823

136. *From: John Sullivan <johnsull4@aol.com>*

*Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 11:37 AM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks from roads and trails*

Dear Commissioners,

I am emailing you today concerning the topic of setbacks from roads and trails for trapping.

I live in Alder, MT and have been an active trapper for over 55 years (I am 69 now). I hunt and fish as much as possible as well and have never had a citation for any F&G violation in my life. I follow the rules and can't imagine hunting and trapping any other way. I am a lifetime member of the MTA.

Concerning this trapping issue I urge you to proceed slowly and with as much feedback as possible from people who truly understand trapping. (I am sure you will get a great deal of advice from many people who have never been on a trapline, have never set or tended a trap, and don't know anything about it).

Unlike hunting which has rules written to be species specific such as deer hunting regs, bear hunting regs, duck hunting regs, etc. trapping rules and regs seem like they are more broad based. While they should likewise be species specific because furbearers are as different from each other as are bears and pheasants.

Rules that might make sense for setbacks that apply to coyote trapping for example may be irrelevant or counter productive for beaver or pine marten trapping. The tools are different, the techniques are different, the habitat is different, the species look entirely different and the market for each fur is very different from year to year. So one size does not fit all and one type of setback certainly does not fit all.

Roads and trail setbacks also must address what defines a road or a trail. Game wardens are often forced to interpret regulations that are not clearly defined which makes life difficult for them as well as the sportsmen who are trying to do the right thing.

In summary, I stress that trapping is very technical in nature. Trapping one and only one species is technical in itself and when you combine several species it presents a huge challenge to get it right. So please take

the time needed to craft any changes correctly. And please seek advice from people who understand this subject.

Best Regards,

John Sullivan  
Alder, MT

**137. From: Scott Doherty <scott\_doherty@hotmail.com>**  
**Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 12:23 PM**  
**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**  
**Subject: [EXTERNAL] August trapping meeting**

Hello,

Please take the following points into consideration for the August trapping meeting concerning set backs:

- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.
- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.
- That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.
- The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Scott Doherty

**138. From: William Boehme <wmb1620@gmail.com>**  
**Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 12:59 PM**  
**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**  
**Subject: [EXTERNAL] New Trapping Set Back Regulation**

I understand that during the July MTFWP Commission meeting new set back regulations were addressed during Swift Fox season discussions. I am advised that in the coming August MTFWP Commission meeting new set back regulation could be imposed.

I wish to express my opinion that no new regulation be imposed prior to a period of public comment by landholders, trappers and other stakeholders involved.

Thank you,  
William Boehme  
Kalispell, MT

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows 10

**139. From: bigskyhal.excite <bigskyhal@excite.com>**  
**Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 1:03 PM**  
**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**  
**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Setbacks**

After listening to the arguments concerning trapping setbacks, I wonder if the animal rights



individuals present are just using this to destroy the rights of Montanas to trap? I think another big issue is how much use do some of these areas get from other groups? It seems to me that someone could claim to be a user of a particular area just to make sure their neighbor could not trap in that area. It also puts a burdon on the forest service or private individuals. If for instance they have a problem beaver blocking a culvert on the designated road or trail (maybe closed in the winter, but open to skiers, anowmobiles, etc.) and washing out the roadway. Will these problem beaver be able to be removed? Much less the loss of opportunities for Montans to trap martin, bobcat and wolves? I spend a lot of time with trappers across the state. Not one of them wants a conflict with another group. They already do everything they can to avoid other people. I would ask why is this even an issue? I would be very careful in applying policies that exempt one group of Montanans from their activities while allowing others to utilize the resource. Thank You, Harold Johnson, Montana Trappers Association, Vice President East.

140. *From: Joel Shechter <joels@montana.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 6:35 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Cc: 7mbuell@itstriangle.com  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda for August 13 Commission Meeting*

I am 80 years old and well beyond the time when most men are drawn to trapping, but I believe strongly in the right of a man to pursue the livelihood that suits him best, subject only to reasonable restrictions that serve to minimize conflict between different groups of users. Before the onset of COVID-19, I discussed the pros and cons of trapping on a regular basis with visitors to my traveling historical exhibit at the Visitors Center on Lolo Pass (US Hwy 12.)

In support of my trapping friends, I ask for consideration of the following items at the August 13th, 2020 meeting of the MTFWP Commission meeting:

1. That any motion dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one-year sunset clause;
2. That any motion dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting;
3. That no final action action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting;
4. That all land managers and users have an equal voice in determining where trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joel Shechter

141. *From: russ61hi@yahoo.com <russ61hi@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 6:17 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] August Commission Meeting*

Dear Members of the Commission,

I am concerned about the unplanned discussion on trapping setbacks. I would ask that at the August Commission meeting that:

- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.
- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.
- That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.
- The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Sincerely,

Russell Garcia

406-359-7248

Glendive, MT

142. *From: Jim & Fran Buell <7mbuell@itstriangle.com>*  
*Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 11:23 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Trapping Setbacks*

Chairman Colton and Members;

Knowing that Becky Dockter, FWP legal counsel, has opined that the June 25, 2020 motion to change swift fox season date and boundary was broadly written so as to allow for soliciting comments on placing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails; on behalf of the membership of the Montana Trappers Association I would ask that:

Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.

Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.

That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.

The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

On a personal note I support the swift fox proposals; the R6 trappers I have spoken with are also in favor.

Thank you for serving on the Commission.

Take Care

Jim Buell  
MTA President

143. *From: guymtelkhunter <[guymtelkhunter@aol.com](mailto:guymtelkhunter@aol.com)>*  
*Date: 7/14/20 8:25 PM (GMT-07:00)*  
*To: [fwcommis@mt.gov](mailto:fwcommis@mt.gov)*  
*Subject: Set backs*

Enough is enough, no more trapping setbacks. Thanks, Guy Kempthorne- Missoula, Mt

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

144. *From: steintl@yahoo.com <[steintl@yahoo.com](mailto:steintl@yahoo.com)>*  
*Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 11:27 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <[FWComm@mt.gov](mailto:FWComm@mt.gov)>*  
*Cc: [cartim8@gmail.com](mailto:cartim8@gmail.com); [fwpdistrict2@gmail.com](mailto:fwpdistrict2@gmail.com); [rstuker@itstriangle.com](mailto:rstuker@itstriangle.com); [lwbrowser@yahoo.com](mailto:lwbrowser@yahoo.com); [scolton@yellowstonelaw.com](mailto:scolton@yellowstonelaw.com)*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment re. Trapping Setbacks*

Honorable MT-FWP Commissioners,

I am writing to you in my private capacity, as a Montana resident for over eighteen years, and on behalf of my family of five in Missoula, for the purposes of providing public comment on the topic of trapping setbacks currently being considered by your great Commission. It has come to my attention there may be an attempt to add additional setback requirements to the already highly-regulated activity of trapping, and I am humbly and adamantly recommending that NO NEW SETBACKS be established by the Commission.

Specifically, I recommend that NO SETBACKS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED ON EXCEPTED ROADS OR TRAILS AT THE AUGUST MEETING. If the Commission is moving towards imposing setbacks on excepted roads, or in any other locations, I recommend that the matter be put out for public comment, and then voted on during the December meeting, before making any final decisions.

Furthermore, if for some reason setbacks are imposed, I respectfully recommend that there be attached to it a one-year sunset clause.

The Commission should instead allow the experts at the Department of FWP to identify and plan where trapping setbacks should appropriately apply, rather than mistakenly painting a broad brush across the entire Montana landscape. Public comments would allow for all land users and land managers to have an equal voice in determining specific excepted roads or trails near highly populated areas that may deserve setback requirements.

Finally, if this e-mail will be entered into the public record, please redact my name and e-mail address information from the public record, out of safety concerns for me and my family as others who have spoken out against animal rights initiatives and who support trapping have been targeted by animal rights extremists. Never has this risk been greater than it is today.

Sincerely, I thank you for your time and attention to my comments that argue strongly against additional trapping setbacks.

Respectfully,

D. Steintl

Missoula, MT

*145. From: Montana Backcountry <[montanabackcountry@gmail.com](mailto:montanabackcountry@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 7:21 PM  
To: FWP Commission <[FWComm@mt.gov](mailto:FWComm@mt.gov)>  
Cc: Kujala, Quentin <[qkujala@mt.gov](mailto:qkujala@mt.gov)>; McDonald, Ken <[kmcdonald@mt.gov](mailto:kmcdonald@mt.gov)>; Williams, Martha <[Martha.Williams@mt.gov](mailto:Martha.Williams@mt.gov)>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: trapping setbacks*

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

We are resubmitting this comment on the 2020 Furbearer regulations to ensure that it is part of the record during the official public comment period. On behalf of the backcountry skiing community, we appreciate the Commission's interest in preventing user conflict between the trapping community and skiers with dogs.

On Sun, Jun 21, 2020 at 10:19 AM Montana Backcountry <[montanabackcountry@gmail.com](mailto:montanabackcountry@gmail.com)> wrote:

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

June 20, 2020

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Montana Backcountry Alliance, we are responding to your directive of October 17, 2019 pertaining to **trapping setbacks** on closed roads, and specifically, your request for explicit areas where trapping without a significant setback may result in increased conflict with other winter recreationists. (See enclosed cover sheet.) We appreciate your willingness to revisit the issue.

The Montana Backcountry Alliance (MBA) is a statewide group formed in 2005 representing the backcountry ski, snowboard, Nordic ski and snowshoe community. Our mission is to preserve quality traditional human-powered winter recreation experiences, reduce conflict, improve opportunity, and promote safety among backcountry winter users in Montana. We have over 1,000 members and supporters in (mostly) western Montana.

Many of our members like to ski, snowboard or snowshoe with their dogs in the winter, and we typically use trails and open or closed (administratively, or closed by snow) roads to access the backcountry. Traps placed directly upon a road or trail, or with only a minimal setback, places our dogs – and potentially even our youngest skiers – at risk of serious injury in a trap.

In response to your request at the October 2019 meeting, we have consulted some of our organizational leaders and backcountry skiers in the Flathead, Missoula and Bozeman areas, and we have compiled a list of some of the most frequently and regularly skied roads, trails and areas in western Montana. For each area, we have suggested a larger, more appropriate setback. In many cases where recreational use is extremely high, and where road densities are so high as to preclude setbacks, we have suggested the road or area be closed to trapping entirely in order to reduce conflict between winter recreationists.

In addition, we are urging the Department to retain the Bozeman area setbacks that were previously adopted and which are currently part of the trapping regulations.

Our list of requested closures and setbacks is attached for your review, along with a copy of our previous comment to the Commission last August.

In submitting this request, we recognize that virtually the entire public domain in western Montana is available for trapping, yet there are only a handful of areas that are suitable and accessible for backcountry skiing in the winter. So, in the interest of reducing user-conflict on our public lands, we urge the Department to incorporate our requested setbacks and closures into the trapping regulations as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Montana Backcountry Alliance  
Greg Peters, President

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**Montana Backcountry Alliance**

P.O. Box 8691  
Missoula, MT 59807

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**Montana Backcountry Alliance**

P.O. Box 8691  
Missoula, MT 59807

146. *From: john wilson <trapperjohnwilson@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 10:53 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Set backs*

We need to impose what is listed in the file that I have attached. The commissioners need to start listening to the FWP wardens, and Regional Directors. I feel your committee gives more consideration and wanting to appease these animal rights groups, than you do the true conservationist meaning the Trappers, and Predator hunters.

With all the new animal rights activists groups that have surfaced in the last 15 years in Montana the Commissioner's themselves should start questioning the animal rights activists about what their true agenda is.

If you (Commisioners) are true conservationist and want to uphold the values and traditions of our great state . You should know what is going on out in the field. You should know that Predators are out of control in Western Montana. If you saddle us trapper's with more regulations you will be aiding the animal rights activists, and the predators.

Thank you for your time.

John R Wilson  
Bonner, Mt

147. *From: Dennis Myers <woodchip164@gmail.com>  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 7:47 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Setbacks*

Please consider letting the dept of fish wildlife and parks identify where setbacks apply play out in a manner which will allow all land managers And users to have equal voice in Determining what are the trapping setbacks will be applied That no final action on imposing trapping Set backs on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting

Sent from my iPad

148. *From: Tom Fieber <tfieber@bresnan.net>  
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 11:08 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Setbacks on Roads & Trails*

I was surprised that FWP Commissioners brought up this issue, that was not on the agenda. Then to move to have a short public comment period of only a few weeks and act on it in August is wrong. I see this as a benefit to a small group that has been pushing this agenda for years. Our understanding was that due to the virus shutdowns, these issues would be delayed until virus restrictions were lifted and others could be included. According to a FWP legal spokesperson during the video conference, "it would be legal", but is it ethical or proper.

I adamantly request that there be no final decision at the August meeting. When I spoke in support at a past commissioners meeting, I thought that this would be a joint working group not pushed through by one side. This leaves a very bad taste in my mouth. This issue needs to be addressed with all interested parties including FWP.

Tom Fieber

149. *From: Tom Fieber <tfieber@bresnan.net>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 12:59 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Setbacks on Roads & Trails*

FWP Commissioners and Director

I am at a loss for words, to think that something that has been working here in Montana for close to 200 years is now wrong. We have seen human population grow and access to public lands increase. The actual number of reported injuries to children or dogs has not happened or if so with dogs, happens on private land. Very few dogs have been caught in traps that are accompanied by humans on public lands.

Rarely have we encountered another user in our trapping areas. Each time we have, we stop and visit with them. We explain that traps are in the area and that all traps are at least fifty feet from the open roads. Never once have we had negative response, just a friendly thank you for letting them know.

Seems that responsible pet owners keep their dogs close and don't allow their dogs to chase deer and elk. Not doing so puts more dogs at risk of injury or death from a wolf attack than all the traps that are set. Fact, the number of dogs killed each year by wolves is much higher than by traps.

Tom Fieber      Polson

150. *From: mt halvonik <mthalvonik@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 3:48 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] setbacks*

No more setback rules!!

151. *From: redhawk6096 <redhawk6096@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 9:05 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping set backs.*

I would like to urge the commission to table any discussion in regards to trapping set backs on roads and trails until the Department of FWP plan is complete.

Best regards  
Michael Vickerson

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S®6 active, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

152. *From: THOMAS Jackson <lazyjllabs8@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 8:45 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping set backs*

I am writing in opposition to any new set backs it's already tough enough with the set backs that are in place. Seems like trappers and other sportsman keep giving away more and more freedoms to environmentalists when will it end when there is no more outdoor activities.

Thank you

153. *From: Charlene Pontoriero <cpontoriero683@gmail.com>  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 3:42 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping setbacks*

Good day,

As a trapper, I respectfully request the following, in regards to trap setbacks being part of the plan on trapping swift fox:

---Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.  
---Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.  
---That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.  
---The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlene Pontoriero,  
hunter, fisherman, and trapper

154. *From: RICHARD POWERS <rmpaaa@cs.com>  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 5:46 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

At your recent meeting the subject of trapping setbacks was discussed at length. There currently exist many trapping setback regulations and imposing any additional setbacks will only further complicate trapping in MT. I oppose any expansion of trapping setbacks and ask that the following points be considered during your next setback discussions.

- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.
- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.
- That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.
- The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rick Powers  
49813 MT HWY 43  
Wise River, MT 59862  
Cell 864-640-0109  
Ranch 406-689-3630



155. *From: Jeff Rader <jlrader2001@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 9:39 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Setbacks*

Dear Commissioners ,

Once again, the anti-trap, non-consumptive user groups are forcing the Commission to look at a solution in search of a problem.

Regarding the issue of setbacks in areas where city people and their unleashed/uncontrolled domestic pets interfere and conflict with legal trapping activities, there are already "trap free zones". No other zones or areas restricted by "setbacks" are needed, as evidenced by the lack of statistically significant incidents that would indicate a need for trapping setbacks. The trappers were here first and city dwellers need to understand that they need to work around the trappers activities.

The recommendations made by the "Montana Backcountry Alliance" are unwarranted and not substantiated by any data that would support closures/setbacks on these 30+ areas! The number of domestic animals unintentionally caught in traps is statistically insignificant, and children on skis are probably not going to be caught in a foothold trap! Recent immigrants to Montana and recreationists must get used to the idea of traps being present on the public landscape and adjust accordingly, just as the anti-consumer groups think that ranchers are supposed to get used to the idea of a certain amount of livestock losses to wolves and predators.

Having said that, I would leave it up to the anti-conservation/anti-trap groups such as Montana Backcountry Alliance, Trap Free Montana, Wolves of the Rockies, Footloose Montana, Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society to pool their resources and provide substantial public education so that the general public is aware of trapping activities and the benefits of trapping on public land. Let's see them put their money where their mouths are rather than infringing on trapping activities.

One issue that hasn't been mentioned yet is the hypocrisy (again) of the anti-trap/animal rights community. They claim trapping set backs are needed because the traps "might" capture dogs and cats. This is a clear admission that these pets are roaming through the woods unsupervised and in violation of any leash laws that certain municipalities have enacted. Importantly, what is neglected to recognize was the effect these pets have on native species. What also is neglected to recognize is that the actions of irresponsible pet owners could indeed lead to the enactment of a statewide leash law (bird hunters and their hunting dogs, anyone?).

The entire issue of trapping setbacks are coming from anti-trapping groups based out of the western part of the state (Bitterroot Valley and Missoula) and these factions shouldn't dictate what happens for their County let alone the entire state of Montana.

And Commissioners, for your consideration, as far as the anti's respecting trappers viewpoints for example, I don't particularly relish the idea of having a job chopping the heads off chickens, or of a career working in the sewers, or working with the mentally disadvantaged, but I respect those that do. And though the non-consumers don't relish the idea of trapping sustainable furbearers and predators, they should respect those that do trap.

The number of domestic animals unintentionally caught in traps is statistically insignificant. Recent immigrants to Montana and recreationists must get used to the idea of there being traps on the public landscape and adjust accordingly, just as the anti-consumer groups think that ranchers might get used to the idea of a certain amount of livestock losses to wolves.

Given these circumstances, I am respectfully requesting that the Commission:

1. Impose a one year Sunset Clause for any motion dealing with trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails made at the August meeting;
2. Put out for Public Comment any motion at the August meeting that deals with imposing setbacks on excepted roads and trails and then vote on this motion at the December meeting;
3. Take no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails at the August meeting;
4. Let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply and play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and historical users (trappers) to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Jeff Rader  
Box 6273  
Bozeman, MT  
59771

156. *From: Garrett Bacon <gbbacon@gmail.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 7:54 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

Please do not take any action on trapping setbacks until you have the input from landowners and the users of our outdoors.

Thank you  
Garrett Bacon  
East Helena

157. *From: CenturyLink Customer MICHAEL G FREEMAN <mhfreeman@centurytel.net>  
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 12:09 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping restrictions, road setbacks*

Dear Commissioners-

Please take the following into perspective when deciding on road setback restrictions. Don't let the antis take this opportunity to push their agenda when people are focusing on other issues in life.

- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.
- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.
- That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.
- The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Any questions, please feel free to call me at 406-261-3625.

Thank you-

Mike Freeman

*158. From: Jim Winters <jwint1218@gmail.com>  
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 8:55 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Setback Discussion*

Dear Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Commission,

I was surprised to hear that the meeting on Swift Fox boundary changes included the broader conversation concerning trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails. It is my understanding that this may then put possible changes on the fast track of decision for the August meeting. I feel strongly that postponing any discussion or decisions on setbacks in the August meeting would allow further public comment as well as a better working relationship between trappers and MTFWP.

I have been a trapper for many years and have taken every trapper education class made available to me. I was delighted to move to the great state of Montana where I was able to join together with other trappers at the MTFWP Wolf Trapping class where I again heard from MTFWP the great importance of making wildlife management decisions on the basis of biology and science, NOT on emotionalism.

I must say, it is irresponsible dog owners with their dogs running off leash that are wanting greater restrictions on trapping. I have seen it and experienced it first-hand. My wife hikes every week with a "Dog Free" hiking group because of the problems these ladies have witnessed by irresponsible dog owners.

I have listened to biologists speak on the importance of us trappers assisting the state by being the eyes and ears of MTFWP on much of the small wildlife studies because of your inability to be out there in the numbers we can provide. I heard that our reporting is essential to your studies and a benefit to the study of wildlife. That is why I faithfully send in my report in a timely manner each year to help. I'm proud of the working relationship we have with MTFWP.

So please, give us adequate time to respond with sensible information and adequate research as to the benefit of less restrictions rather than further hindrance to our rich heritage of trapping.

Thank You For Your Kind Consideration,

Sincerely,

Rev. James R. Winters

4674 US HWY 93

Darby, MT

503-830-0995

159. *From: Lewis Tafelmeyer <lewis-jt@hotmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 5:00 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you today to express my displeasure with the proposed trapping setback restrictions that will be discussed at the August meeting. Road and trail setbacks should be discussed further at local levels with the communities and fwp personnel to establish limited specific roads and trails that may have some validity in establishing setbacks. Painting a setback regulation with a broad brush across the state would be a mistake. I support working with the Montana trappers association to establish this. Please suspend a ruling on this issue until sufficient comment can be had.

Sincerely, Lewis Tafelmeyer. Helena MT.

Sent from my iPhone

160. I have been hiking, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing for over 50 years. I have covered many states and a few countries and have never had a problem with trappers. I am more worried about being attacked by grizzly, mountain lion and the wolf then I am about getting my dog or grand children in a trap. I have had more problems with cross country skiers running me off the trails with their dogs then I can mention. Trappers are responsible and always very professional, they take time to help me understand what they are doing. If we do not control the predators we will no longer have any wildlife to enjoy. The wolf are killing everything in site, including our beloved dogs. The wolf carry many diseases and they kill for sport. I do enjoy seeing a wolf, but I do not want them to over take. The wolf do not just pray on the old and weak, the are top apex predators. Please do not allow the city people and out of stater's close all the trails that trapper need to do his job. We need trappers to help control the predator population. We have had 8 people mauled by grizzly bear this year in Montana and we will have even more as the population of predators grow. So please do not close more roads and trails until we can have a meeting to discuss the topic. It seems that this is the anti's way to get what they want because they can afford big fancy lawyers. Please reconsider making any action final until everyone has a say. Thank's Scott

*Scott Bigfork, MT*

161. This year I made 20 fisher boxes for region 1. my donated time is 53 hours. Last year 30 boxes donated time 90 hours, thats over 5000 dollars of labor. Never trapped a fisher in my life. Other trappers spent 2 weeks hanging those 30 boxes, it took 3 days just to locate the sites, more time, gas and man hours. What do antis do, nothing. I take that back they cause problems for trappers and fish and game. Stop this time consuming madness.

*dan thingelstad ronan, MT*

162. Based on the limited data available for re-established swift fox populations in Montana, there is absolutely no reason to expand the trapping district. However, it certainly makes sense to shorten the trapping season so not to interfere with the breeding season. As stated on the TruthAboutFur website...we trap to "provide food and income; protect property, habitat and human health; and support responsible wildlife management". Swift Fox trapping does not provide food or income, does not protect property, habitat and human health nor does support responsible wildlife management. More data is needed on Montana's Swift Fox populations before any trapping

expansion occurs. Today's wildlife managers need to seriously and carefully evaluate the need for trapping in our ever shrinking habitats. Yours truly, Gregg Robinson

*Gregg Robinson Billings, MT*

163. Born and raised in Ronan, and now we are an out of state family that continues enjoy the Montana outdoors, I have never been impacted by trapping. Expanding setbacks feels like a underhanded way to eliminate trapping. Trapping is part of Montana heritage, and should be part of Montana's future.

*Blane Thingelstad Denver, CO*

164. In northwest Mt. the setbacks and regulations are fine as they are. I am against any larger setbacks or closers

*Dana Thingelstad Ronan, MT*

165. I believe you have no documentation to warrant these road restriction, another ploy by anti trapping. I have talked to active cross country skiers with DOGS in region 1 and 2 and have no conflicts or disagreement with them about trapping. Two of them where surprised when I stuck my hand in a no bs trap and I was still alive. Keep the 150 foot set back.

*Dan Thingelstad ronan, MT*

166. FWP Comissioners, Please hold off on any proposed increases for setbacks on roads or trails for public land trapping. The issue that drives the anti trappers are dogs being caught in traps. I have trapped on public land and have NEVER caught a dog. I am concerned for the safety of everyone's pet, but increasing set backs is not the correct answer. The correct answer is education on both sides. Its the job of the trapper to set in area where theres low risk to catching a dog. Using the proper bait to lure the animal. And most importantly the proper trap. And on the other side it is having a little more awareness to where their dogs are at all times and overall control. Increasing setbacks can make the trapper less effective and some spots impossible to set with the way the terrain is. Most animals take the path of least resistance. In predator control situations this would make it tougher for the trapper. There are hundreds of people everyday using the trails walking by traps. I have a well behaved dog that i always keep on leash. Why? For many reasons. Keeping them away from wildlife is a big one. A deer can kill her with one kick. Also not being mistaken for a game animal. This is specifically for hunting season though. Mistakes can happen. And the last is because I don't want her friendly demeanor getting her in trouble with other dogs leashed or unleashed. My dog has been trapped before. And like most others, its the initial surprise that scares the dog. But when the trap is taken off the dog runs around like normal. The cases where a dog has been killed are usually because of a blatant disregard of the law by the trapper and/or carelessness from the pet owner. When things are done with thought and care both parties can benefit. With education I believe this can be done. How about a mandatory trapper education to purchase a license? Public lands are multi use and I find it quite hypocritical of antis that want to see trapping, ranching and hunting off public lands so they can have it for themselves. The "vengeful" trappers from the mountain man era are a dead breed. Their motive was money. The new age trapper is more versatile and aware of dangers trapping on land that isn't freshly trailblazed. We have the well being of the animal we set for in mind as well as the general public that can come across the traps. We trap to help keep people and property safe. As well as managing the wildlife around our homes to ensure a hunt-able population of prey animals and a trap-able population of fur bearers for years to come. Thank you for the ability to comment and have my input heard. I love this state and look forward to trapping here for years to come.

*Michael Tvardzik Victor, MT*

167. 1. please abolish trapping, there is no value to this barbaric activity as we do not need to harvest fur 2. if trapping will not be banned outright we must act to ensure that this activity of a few does not hinder safe access to public lands for the rest of us mandatory 24 hour trap checks are necessary setback from minor used trails must be at least 100 yards trapping on major trail systems must be forbidden trappers must be liable for injury to any person or pet currently trapping is performed on the continental divide trail making one of the most iconic national trail networks harmful to users in an era where outdoor activity is paramount to creating a safer, healthy society, trapping is an unnecessary hindrance to progress

*Tim Wetherill MD Helena, MT*

168. I am very much opposed to any change in the trap setback.

*Steve Betlach Troy, MT*

169. I am against the setbacks as currently proposed.

*Keven L Heinle FAIRFIELD, MT*

170. I'm commenting on trapping set back regulations and closing more trails and roads for trapping I am against any more trail closures or making the set back distance any further than it is. I watched the commissioner meeting and heard groups that wanted more trails closed. these groups are not even around public land during trapping season. Don't let them tell you they are. Different groups keep wanting different trails closed all the time and it won't stop, give them a inch and they want a mile. They just want to abolish all trapping. They have designated trails around Bozeman and Missoula and I bet you money they are hardly used during trapping season .Groups will claim anything , like we play tennis with are dogs on that trail all winter long. please use facts and common sense when listening to why they want more and more trails closed . Thanks for reading.  
Alan Jensen

*Alan Jensen Whitehall, MT*

171. It is good and appropriate that some roads be designated with more setback distance than others. However, if certain groups have their way, ALL roads will require setbacks. Address the concerns of legitimate users rather than anti-consumptive use activists. They want to use the F&G commission as a pawn to eventually regulate montana's sportsmen and women out of the forest. In each region, give 2 roads with expanded setbacks. If they want to bring their pets, use those designated roads. Without pets, use any road you want. And by the way, a dog caught in a foot gripper trap will suffer no injury 99+ % of the time, and when released will be able to continue on trotting with his owners. My own dog was caught several times until she learned better. Never was there an injury or even a limp for a second. We all have to give up a little so that we can all get along. Activists/extremists on the other hand have to have it all their way or they'll call death threats to your family, burn your outbuildings etc. Many of the people you will receive comments from will be people who are members of domestic terrorist groups as designated by Homeland security and FBI. Never bow to terrorists and give Montana back the good F&G it used to have when I grew up here. I taught bowhunters education for 8 years to make this state a better place and bowhunters more ethical. Terrorists only have damage and destruction as an agenda, and could care less is EVERY animal in montana dies from disease or overpopulation. Montana's hunter, trappers and fisherman have always been Montana's conservtionists, and they have footed the bill to pay for it as well.  
Cordially, Dean Chapel

*DEAN CHAPEL DEER LODGE, MT*

172. I more roads

*corey richwine ronan, MT*

173. *From: Dorothy Filson <djfilson@bresnan.net>*

*Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 2:31:43 AM*

*To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>*

*CC: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on trapping guidelines*

Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments related to trapping regulations in Montana and how they effect our economy, lifestyles and their impact in Montana going forward.

Montana is one of the few places remaining that has enough and varied wildlife species that it comprises an important part of our economy. Thousands of locals and out-of-state visitors enjoy being out on Montana public lands due to the possibility for wildlife viewing.

Those activities generate \$7.1 billion to local economies and create over 70,000 jobs, equal to \$2.2 billion in wages for economies. This is taken from the 2017 Headwaters Economic Report.

However, those revenues are adversely impacted when people stay away after they become aware of the safety dangers to themselves and their pets due to trapping on public lands.

Less than ½ of 1% of Montanans trap, yet they are holding 99% of public lands hostage from the enjoyment of those lands.

And, those realities translate into a significant loss of revenue to Montana's economy, if people are not out freely recreating on those public lands.

No one makes a living from trapping. Many are stockpiling thousands of pelts in the hope the demand for them will come back, since it is currently in a steep freefall.

The damage caused by trapping in Montana is incalculable due to the loss of non-target wildlife and people's pets who are killed or maimed.

As a taxpayer, I should be able to enjoy being out on public lands without the fear that I, or a companion animal, could be endangered by stepping in a cluster of traps.

Yes, trappers set traps in clusters, hidden under leaves or needles, so, if an animal hears the distress calls of their mate and comes to investigate, it, too, steps into a trap.

And, when the parents die or languish in a trap, their young starve to death.

This is a public safety issue plain and simple, especially around urban areas or areas of high recreational use.

Those areas should be closed entirely for trapping similar to block management for hunting.

28,000 acres have been set aside in the Rattlesnake NRA near Missoula to be trap-free. This was done by the FS, yet FWP continues to allow trapping on public lands. It's time for this to stop.

Not only is trapping a threat to the safety of those recreating on public lands, but we must think forward to preserve rare, fragile and endangered species that we, in Montana, are still fortunate to have.

That may not always be the case. The indiscriminate nature of trapping poses many perils for the protection of the wildlife we enjoy.

When I visit with people who have come here from other parts of the country or other countries, they are appalled that trapping is still even allowed in Montana.

In some places, it went by the wayside decades, even centuries ago.

They are surprised that we are not doing everything we can to preserve the wildlife we have.

Frankly, I'm not sure how to even answer them, it is so senseless. It gives Montana a barbaric reputation.

I grew up on a ranch in Broadwater Co. and have been in the woods my entire life. Yet, now, going into wooded areas is a totally different experience.

Gone are the chattering and chirping and brush crashing as animals bounded away. In many areas, it is now like walking through a graveyard.

Let's preserve what we have left while we have it, as it is on the brink of disappearing.

Thank you,

Dorothy Filson

PO Box 553

Bozeman MT 59771

Comments should be emailed to [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov)

They should also be cc'd to all five commissioners: [fwcomm@mt.gov](mailto:fwcomm@mt.gov)

It is important to make your comments unique, the agency will toss redundancy.

The commission must look beyond just trails and setbacks in their consideration of closures. We must close entire areas that are used for recreation.

The US Forest Service put aside 28,000 acres of the Rattlesnake NRA to be trap-free. It has been that way since 1980. Yet Fish, Wildlife and Parks continue to grant trappers free reign on our public lands. The precedent has been set by the FS, it's time for FWP to act.



Remember the deadline is Tuesday at 5 pm.

174. *From: Jedediah Brodie <jedediah.brodie@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 9:04 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>; FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on trapping regulations*

- The state establishes safety zones for hunting; the same should apply to trapping
- Indiscriminate, deadly traps have no place in our urban recreation areas
- Too many family pets are injured or killed in traps
- Recreation is a \$7 billion industry in Montana and people deserve to recreate without fear of traps

--

Jedediah F. Brodie, Ph.D.  
[www.jedediahbrodie.weebly](http://www.jedediahbrodie.weebly)

175. *From: Candy Hartman <candyhart2005@hotmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:33 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing concerning trapping setbacks and asking that you make the changes requested by Montana Backcountry Alliance. I enjoy using the backcountry summer and winter with my dog but the threat of my dog, and other dogs, being caught in trap is always on my mind. Trappers have a large amount of terrain for trapping but there are areas that should be inappropriate for trapping or, at least, deserve larger setbacks.

Thank you for your consideration of this,

Candy Hartman  
201A Bentley Park Loop  
Missoula, MT 59801  
406-493-2137

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

176. *From: Noor Parwana <NParwana@hotmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:46 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping comment*

I am a lover of wildlife as living creatures who have equal right to share this habitat with me unmolested. I support groups like foot loose and trap free montana because I believe profoundly in their goals.

I was dismayed to learn that trapping of swift fox is permitted. There should be NO trapping permitted for this rare species.

I walk, hike, snowshoe and cross country ski with my dogs. I would like to see the strictest possible requirements at any WSA. I recreate around Fleecer, Humbug Spires, Pintlers, Mount Haggin, Rubies, Gravelly's, Snowcrest, Highlands, Thompson Park area near Butte, and many other sw Montana areas.

I am always in fear of my dogs getting into a trap and carry wire cutters with me. Why should I have to live with that fear every time I go out for recreation and enjoyment of the great outdoors. I believe all trapping should be ended except by indigenous people, whose rights should not be abrogated. It is a cruel and unnecessary practice. I have heard people argue they get spiritual benefits from trapping. Really?! They cant find spiritual enjoyment going out into nature without cruelty? I have heard the argument that people make a living off of killing animals through this cruel practice. I would advocate providing the public teat to those people. I would contribute to the fund if it prevented them from torturing wildlife. Trapping should be permitted only under the rarest circumstances for unavoidable reasons.

Since it is unlikely trapping will end any time soon in Montana, please set some regulations that increase the setbacks of traps from roads and trails to at least 150 feet so those of us who go into nature without cruel intent can enjoy being out with our dogs and not worrying.

I have long advocated that traps should be checked more often. It should be mandatory to check a trap every day. I would advocate that anyone who argues otherwise should be required to be held in a trap for six hours to get a sense of what the animal feels as they await their death.

Beaver are finally being recognized for their role in creating healthy riparian areas and improving water quality, reducing water temperature and creating prime fish habitat. I support ending beaver trapping. There are many tools available that make beaver compatible with ranching, irrigation, presence of roads and culverts & etc.

I believe there should be a requirement that a notice is posted at every road and trail where traps are set.

PLEASE hear the desires of those who wish to protect wildlife and give less credibility to those who would torture animals through this cruel practice.

Sincerely,

Noorjahan Parwana

Butte, MT

406/782-3682

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:Mail [go.microsoft.com]) for Windows 10

**177. From: Bill and mery shope <experiencias23@live.com>**

**Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 9:01 PM**

**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding trap setbacks**

Dear Commissioners,

Once again, the anti-trap, non-consumptive user groups are forcing the Commission to look at a solution in search of a problem.

Regarding the issue of setbacks in areas where city people and their unleashed/uncontrolled domestic pets interfere and conflict with legal trapping activities, there are already "trap free zones". No other zones or areas restricted by "setbacks" are needed, as evidenced by the lack of statistically significant incidents that would indicate a need for trapping setbacks. The trappers were here first and city dwellers need to understand that they need to work around the trappers activities.

The recommendations made by the "Montana Backcountry Alliance" are unwarranted and not substantiated by any data that would support closures/setbacks on these 30+ areas. The number of domestic animals unintentionally caught in traps is statistically insignificant and children on skis are probably not going to be caught in a foothold trap.

Recent transplants to Montana and recreationists must get used to the idea of traps being present on the public landscape and adjust accordingly, just as the anti-consumer groups think that ranchers are supposed to get used to the idea of a certain amount of livestock losses to wolves and predators.

Having said that, I would leave it up to the anti-conservation/anti-trap groups such as Montana Backcountry Alliance, Trap Free Montana, Wolves of the Rockies, Footloose Montana, Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society to pool their resources and provide substantial public education so that the general public is aware of trapping activities and the benefits of trapping on public land. Let's see them put their money where their mouths are rather than infringing on trapping activities.

One issue that hasn't been mentioned yet is the hypocrisy (again) of the anti-trap/animal rights community. They claim trapping set backs are needed because the traps "might" capture dogs and cats. This is a clear admission that these pets are roaming through the woods unsupervised and in violation of any leash laws that certain municipalities have enacted. Importantly, what is neglected to be recognized is the effect these pets have on native species. What also is neglected to be recognized is that the actions of irresponsible pet owners could indeed lead to the enactment of a statewide leash law - bird hunters and their hunting dogs, anyone?

The entire issue of trapping setbacks are coming from anti-trapping groups based out of the western part of the state, specifically in the Bitterroot Valley and Missoula, and these factions shouldn't dictate what

happens for their County, let alone the entire state of Montana.

And Commissioners, for your consideration, as far as the anti's respecting trappers viewpoints for example, I don't particularly relish the idea of having a job or a career working in the sewers, or working as a caregiver, but I respect those that do. And though the non-consumers don't relish the idea of trapping sustainable furbearers and predators, they should respect those that do trap.

Given these circumstances, I am respectfully requesting that the Commission:

1. Impose a one year Sunset Clause for any motion dealing with trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails made at the August meeting;
2. Put out for Public Comment any motion at the August meeting that deals with imposing setbacks on excepted roads and trails and then vote on this motion at the December meeting;
3. Take no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails at the August meeting;
4. Let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply and play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and historical users, trappers, to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Respectfully,

William T. Shope Jr  
28 B Street No. 268  
Drummond, MT, 59832

*178. From: Rob Henrekin <mountaincreek@blackfoot.net>  
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 1:48 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping setbacks*

Dear Commissioners,

Just a few comments regarding the proposed trapping setbacks and possible road/trail closures.

I understand the need for some specific areas to be off limits to certain types of trapping, especially around high use areas and urban centers, where conflict is likely to occur.

I would encourage the commissioners to take some time before taking action on this right away at the meeting in August. I would like to see the plans that have been discussed prior to the covid -19 situation given some time to be worked out. I for one would be very willing to set down with land managers and biologists from local agencies, along with concerned land users on both sides of the issue, to discuss areas where trapping closures make sense and where they would not. There is plenty of country in our state, I believe we could work together to resolve areas of potential conflict. It takes some give and take from both sides. Tho it does seem to me that the anti -trapping crowd is more willing to take, than to give.

I agree with FWP's proposed idea of having certain areas designated for setbacks as opposed to individual roads. It seems it would simplify things.

I think there needs to be ample time for discussion tho and those discussions need to include folks from both sides of the isle, as well as locals with knowledge of the historical use of the areas being discussed.

As a wolf trapper, I am against more regulations and restrictions that make it more difficult than it already is to harvest these critters.

But, I believe we can find some common ground on this issue and hopefully find a workable solution.

Thank you for your time,

Rob Henrekin

5980 Woodworth Rd

Seeley Lake, MT. 59868

406-677-3502

**179. From: chelsea.cough@gmail.com <chelsea.cough@gmail.com>**

**Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:34 PM**

**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks**

- Thank you for considering larger trapping setbacks and exclusions.
- I enjoy backcountry skiing/snowboarding in the winter.
- I am concerned for the safety of my dog (my fellow skiers' dogs) during trapping season.
- Most of Montana is open to trapping, yet there are a few areas popular as backcountry skiing areas where trapping may be inappropriate or need a larger setback from trails and roads.
- I urge you to adopt the recommendations submitted by the Montana Backcountry Alliance.

Chelsea Cough

Sent from my iPhone

**180. From: Robert Pierson <bcpierson@blackfoot.net>**

**Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 4:02 PM**

**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping setbacks/closures**

Commissioners,

Here is what I want to see.

No input allowed from out of state entities.

- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails have a one year sunset clause.
- Any motion, at the August meeting, dealing with imposing setbacks on excepted roads or trails be put out for public comment and then voted on at the December meeting.
- That no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails be taken at the August meeting.
- The Commission let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply, play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and users to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Robert Pierson

Trout Creek, MT

181. *From: mt halvonik <mthalvonik@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 3:47 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Setbacks*

I am writing in opposition of more trapping setbacks. This never ends!!

Terry Halvonik

182. *From: Ben Wickham <benwickham2@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:48 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

Good morning,

Thank you for considering a larger trapping setbacks. I live in Bozeman, and I consider myself to be a very considerate dog owner. I leash where appropriate and always pick up after them. In Winter, it can be hard to find quiet places to walk my dogs off leash where they won't bother other people or land owners. I often walk plowed dirt roads because they are quiet, and low in traffic. I frequently leave my dogs in my vehicle while I ski, and then walk them on a road. This includes Bridger Canyon, Big Sky Area, Paradise Valley, and Hyalite Canyon. To think that there could be animal traps close to the road is extremely scary to me.

I understand you're trying to balance a lot of varying opinions. I understand trappers are economically or recreationally interested in catching animals, and they have that right. However, I feel that it is extremely unfair to me as a responsible dog owner to potentially have my best friend trapped and injured if not killed right next to a quiet road we're legally and responsibly walking. I've also often seen children who live on these rural roads playing on the snowbanks. I can't imagine the outcry if one of them got accidentally snagged.

Please enact a reasonable and adequate setback that is larger than the current regulations to protect the public who live in rural areas, and dog owners who responsibly recreate on rural roads in winter and on trails.

Thank you for your hard work,  
Ben Wickham

183. *From: Robert Sheppard <bob.sheppard@blackfoot.net>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:16 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] TRAPPING SETBACKS  
Importance: High*

Dear FWP Commissioners,

As regards trapping setbacks:

There is a reason that the animal activists are so strongly for getting more and larger distance setbacks. Case in point: After the discussion of trap free areas in the Missoula area, a total of 55,000 acres, within less than one minute of that decision being agreed upon, a request to the commission to increase the area to contain the entire main Bitterroot River was put forth by an activist. The activists will not be satisfied until there is NO more trapping in this state and then they will go to another. In well more than 30 years of dealing with animal rights folks, they have NEVER offered to give something, it is always what they want.

Most of these folks came from other states and, ironically, several of the big pushes for no trapping in this state have moved on to other states. Now we have several of the more vocal advocates for no trapping that have come here from other states or in some incidences from other countries. Coincidental? Maybe. The point is: This discussion on setbacks for trapping has the potential to limit trapping in such a manner as to make it unfeasible in many areas. Much more than I believe that you intend to.

I would ask you not to jump into this project without very careful consideration of the consequences, many of which are not easily or readily seen at this time. I would ask that you take no action at this time. Let the original plan have time to be implemented and more information will be gathered so a reasonable decision can be reached.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Sheppard

Ovando, Mt

**184. From: Sean Davis <summit\_chaser@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:56 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Setbacks**

Dear Commissioners,

Here we are again with trappers being punished due to the negligence of others. I am against any new setbacks being imposed as I feel it is up to everyone to take personal responsibility for themselves and pets. Trappers actually purchase licenses and conservation and trapping to support our FWP and to use the land. Last I knew animals harassing wildlife was unlawful.

I live in the town of Forsyth and there is a levy along the Yellowstone River. On any day you can see dogs running up to a hundred yards from the owners chasing the sharptails and rabbits that inhabit that area. What do you think these dogs are doing away from their owners who have them off the leash while

they hike and ski in the backcountry? If a dog gets pinched the trapper is blamed, not the owner of the dog running loose.

And that old lie " For the Safety of our Children" is hilarious at best. What will be next from these groups - setbacks for fishermen so the dogs can run and splash up the streams disrupting aquatic life?

No other hunting groups in this state have constant regulation changes as the Trapping community.

I am respectfully requesting that the Commission:

1. Impose a one year Sunset Clause for any motion dealing with trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails made at the August meeting;
2. Put out for Public Comment any motion at the August meeting that deals with imposing setbacks on excepted roads and trails and then vote on this motion at the December meeting;
3. Take no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails at the August meeting;
4. Let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply and play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and historical users (trappers) to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you

Sean W Davis  
Box 1346  
Forsyth, MT. 59327

*185. From: Hilary Eisen <hilary.eisen@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:33 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping setback and exclusion regulations*

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for considering larger trapping setbacks and exclusions, and for taking public comment on this important topic. I am not opposed to trapping, but as somebody who spends a lot of time skiing on public lands throughout the winter (and trapping season) with my dog, I am concerned for my (and other) dog's safety. While most of Montana is open to trapping, there are relatively few areas in the state that are popular with backcountry (and cross-country) skiers. In these popular recreation areas, trapping is inappropriate or should only occur in tandem with a large setback from trails and roads. I understand that Montana Backcountry Alliance submitted a list of roads and trails that are frequently used by winter recreationists, with recommendations for how to manage trapping in these areas. **I urge you to adopt the recommendations submitted by Montana Backcountry Alliance.**

As a Bozeman resident, **I want to provide an extra word of endorsement for not allowing any trapping in Hyalite Canyon** (except for wildlife research purposes). In the winter, an average of 1,200 cars travel into Hyalite Canyon each weekend day. If you assume that each car has an average of 2 passengers, that is 2,400 skiers, snowshoers, ice climbers, and other outdoor recreationists visiting Hyalite each Saturday and



Sunday, all winter long, and many of these people are recreating with their dogs. It is simply not an appropriate place for trapping.

Thank you,  
Hilary Eisen  
417 S. 14th Ave  
Bozeman, MT 59715

*186. From: Curt Reynolds <crcas3@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:43 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping in Montana*

Ladies & Gentlemen,

**I request that you vote against any idea of imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails.** Montanans (Indians are Montana trappers, too) have a rich history and culture of trapping for food, clothing and income. I remember a time here in Montana when professional biologists supported trapping as a furbearing animal management tool (I know, ancient history). I will bet that all Montana political elites and radical environmentalists have people in their own family tree that were trappers. Hunters, too, for that matter.

Anyway, your political out is to kick the can down the road by stating that you need to **conduct a study** to see if any impacts exist. Then **ask for more public comment and set a future date to vote on it** after the new Governor is in office and Montana Legislature is in session. Rinse and repeat.

Finally, we all know that "trap free zones" is just another ruse set up by radical environmentalists under the guise of the "Montana Backcountry Alliance" and the other usual suspects (Trap Free Montana, Wolves of the Rockies, Footloose Montana, Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society) to outlaw fur trapping. The sad part is you, your MT FWP Commission colleagues, and the MT FWP executive branch agree with such groups but feign neutrality on the issue. Perhaps you should spend some time in the field for a few days with some Montana trappers to see what trapping is about before adding one more restriction to it before reaching your ultimate goal of totally banning trapping forever. I know, I know, the ends justifies the means.

I appreciate your time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Curt Reynolds  
Helena, MT

*187. From: bgraybeal406 <bgraybeal406@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:35 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Setbacks*

Dear Commissioners

It seems the anti-trapping / anti-hunting is pushing another set back agenda that would continue to make trapping more difficult. In the hopes to end all trapping. I hope you come to your senses and don't even consider any more set backs or trapping restrictions. Remember who you work for the Montana Sportsman. Not foot loose montana or other anti-trapping groups. Don't infringe on a true Montana heritage!!

Thanks for your time.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

**188. From: Tom Fieber <tfieber@bresnan.net>**  
**Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 8:42 AM**  
**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**  
**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Setbacks on Roads & Trails**

Dear Commissioners

As advised by FWP personnel in the last meeting please give this a chance to work. Do not use the covid issue as an excuse to run something as important and long lasting through. We as trappers need to have a say in this matter as well as the other groups.

FWP would like to explore the potential for an alternative to a one-size-fits-all, language-oriented approach (written definition). The objective would be to develop regional maps clearly designating areas where setbacks apply or do not apply on public lands. By designating areas, all roads and trails within the area, whether mapped or not, numbered or not, open or closed, would either be subject to setbacks or not due to the area that they are in. This would provide clarity for all user groups and could be tailored to the typical use of the area.

The timeline for completing this work is continues to be in flux. Meeting with federal land managers and other agencies will require going over maps which is not achievable using video conference tools. Rather, in person meetings are needed and will depend upon federal availability. Similarly, an open-house forum for receiving public input on areas where recreation occurs will be far more effective than other options that do not include maps and personal interaction. FWP's will initiate this work when covid related restrictions are lifted and allow for meetings where participants can interact over maps.

Tom Fieber                      Polson

**189. From: Tom Fieber <tfieber@bresnan.net>**  
**Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 8:33 AM**  
**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**  
**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Setbacks on Roads & Trails**

FWP Commissioners and Director

Over the years that I have been trapping I have not had any dogs caught in a wolf trap. Where we trap, we have many days, almost daily, that lion and cat hunters are working. These dogs are not confined to trap setbacks from roads and can travel miles. Funny that cross county skiing dogs are more apt to get caught in a trap when they are under the control of a responsible dog owner. At some point every user needs to accept some risk for their actions. Since not a single child has been caught in a trap while cross country skiing or a few dogs being caught constitutes much of a risk to warrant such a drastic action. Please don't make a final ruling until FWP personnel have a chance to work with other agencies

Why in the world would anyone trample someone else's right based on emotions not facts.

Tom Fieber      Polson

190. *From: Shelley Gilkey <srg.clnc@yahoo.com>*  
*Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 12:43 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>; FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Trapping setbacks*

FWP Commission,

I am rather disappointed in the Commission's management of the June meeting, pertaining to the addition of trapping setback regulations. This was not an item on the agenda.

As a member of the recent Trapping Advisory Committee, we discussed trapping setbacks and restrictions thoroughly. As a result, the inclusion of trapping setbacks, agreeable to all parties, was incorporated into the regulations.

After looking at the excel spreadsheet submitted by Montana Backcountry Alliance, it is clearly an attempt to eliminate trapping altogether in these areas. With 36 areas mentioned, only 4 areas were suggested as setback areas (of 500 feet), the rest were recommended to be closed to trapping altogether. The TAC worked together in an attempt for all recreationalists to enjoy public lands, and not limit it to one or two use groups.

With setbacks already imposed, I don't feel that additional measures or closures should be considered at this time. I ask that the Commission allow FWP to identify where trapping setbacks may be warranted, and allow the users and land managers voice their opinions on it.

I strongly encourage FWP to adopt and enforce strict leash laws on public grounds, with the exception of those legally pursuing game.

I ask that you put recommendations up for public comment and strongly feel that this shouldn't be acted on in the August meeting, and table it until the December meeting. Furthermore, I strongly agree with instituting a sunset clause for any motion, dealing with imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails, during the August meeting.

~Shelley Gilkey  
Deer Lodge, MT

191. *From: Liz Forster <lizforster856@gmail.com>*  
*Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 9:15 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Ski Dogs from Lethal Traps*

To the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commissioners,

I urge you to adopt the recommendations for larger trapping setbacks and exclusions submitted by the Montana Backcountry Alliance. I am an avid backcountry skier living in Missoula and go out with friends who have dogs (I hope to have one of my own soon!). I am concerned for their dogs' safety during trapping season and know that adopting larger trapping setbacks and exclusions can ensure that they're safe while also respecting those who are trapping.

Thank you for considering these setbacks.

Best,  
Liz Forster

203-856-5791

Alexander Blewett III School of Law '22

Colorado College '17

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lizforster1> [linkedin.com]

192. *From: dottun@westernbuildingcenter.com <dottun@westernbuildingcenter.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 6:15 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I do not support trapping restrictions*

Including road closures

--

Dave Ottun  
Manager,  
Western Building Center  
905 1st ST East  
Polson MT 59860  
office; 406-883-4059  
cell; 406-314-0015  
email; [dottun@westernbuildingcenter.com](mailto:dottun@westernbuildingcenter.com)



193. *From: Michael Tvardzik <fendrjgstng94@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:37 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerning trapping setbacks*

Dear Commissioners,

Once again, the anti-trap, non-consumptive user groups are forcing the Commission to look at a solution in search of a problem.

Regarding the issue of setbacks in areas where city people and their unleashed/uncontrolled domestic pets interfere and conflict with legal trapping activities, there are already "trap free zones". No other zones

or areas restricted by “setbacks” are needed, as evidenced by the lack of statistically significant incidents that would indicate a need for trapping setbacks. The trappers were here first and city dwellers need to understand that they need to work around the trappers activities.

The recommendations made by the “Montana Backcountry Alliance” are unwarranted and not substantiated by any data that would support closures/setbacks on these 30+ areas. The number of domestic animals unintentionally caught in traps is statistically insignificant and children on skis are probably not going to be caught in a foothold trap.

Recent immigrants to Montana and recreationists must get used to the idea of traps being present on the public landscape and adjust accordingly, just as the anti-consumer groups think that ranchers are supposed to get used to the idea of a certain amount of livestock losses to wolves and predators.

Having said that, I would leave it up to the anti-conservation/anti-trap groups such as Montana Backcountry Alliance, Trap Free Montana, Wolves of the Rockies, Footloose Montana, Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society to pool their resources and provide substantial public education so that the general public is aware of trapping activities and the benefits of trapping on public land. Let's see them put their money where their mouths are rather than infringing on trapping activities.

One issue that hasn't been mentioned yet is the hypocrisy (again) of the anti-trap/animal rights community. They claim trapping set backs are needed because the traps “might” capture dogs and cats. This is a clear admission that these pets are roaming through the woods unsupervised and in violation of any leash laws that certain municipalities have enacted. Importantly, what is neglected to recognize was the effect these pets have on native species. What also is neglected to recognize is that the actions of irresponsible pet owners could indeed lead to the enactment of a statewide leash law - bird hunters and their hunting dogs, anyone?

The entire issue of trapping setbacks are coming from anti-trapping groups based out of the western part of the state, specifically in the Bitterroot Valley and Missoula, and these factions shouldn't dictate what happens for their County, let alone the entire state of Montana.

And Commissioners, for your consideration, as far as the anti's respecting trappers viewpoints for example, I don't particularly relish the idea of having a job or a career working in the sewers, or working as a caregiver, but I respect those that do. And though the non-consumers don't relish the idea of trapping sustainable furbearers and predators, they should respect those that do trap.

Given these circumstances, I am respectfully requesting that the Commission:

1. Impose a one year Sunset Clause for any motion dealing with trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails made at the August meeting;
2. Put out for Public Comment any motion at the August meeting that deals with imposing setbacks on excepted roads and trails and then vote on this motion at the December meeting;
3. Take no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails at the August meeting;
4. Let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply and play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and historical users, trappers, to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Michael Tvardzik

-Montana Resident  
-Lifetime MTA member

194. *From: JR <jrmooney@alumni.nmu.edu>*  
*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:11 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concern Over Trapping*

Hello and thank you for considering my opinion. I enjoy backcountry skiing in the winter and am concerned for the safety of my dog during trapping season. Most of Montana is open to trapping yet there are only a few areas popular to skiing where trapping may need a larger setback from roads and trails. I urge you to adopt the recommendations submitted by the Montana Backcountry Alliance Group.

Thank you again for your consideration, and have a good day.

- JR Mooney

195. *From: Jason Bacaj <jbacaj@gmail.com>*  
*Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:24 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on draft 2020-2021 Furbearer rules*

Hey all,

First off, thanks what y'all do. I appreciate having the opportunity to speak on these matters. I'm an avid winter recreationalist —primarily backcountry skiing — and love to bring my dog along. Allowing people to place traps on roads and trails significantly raises the dangers of recreating with my dog.

I urge you to adopt the trap setbacks submitted by the Montana Backcountry Alliance. I don't believe the guidance offered by the MBA unduly impacts trappers, as most of the state is open to trapping, whereas the areas for backcountry skiing are limited.

Thanks again,  
Jason Bacaj  
Gallatin County resident

196. *From: jbck <jbck@centurytel.net>*  
*Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:07 PM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] anti-trap, non-consumptive user groups*

Dear Commissioners,

Once again, the anti-trap, non-consumptive user groups are forcing the Commission to look at a solution in search of a problem.

Regarding the issue of setbacks in areas where city people and their unleashed/uncontrolled domestic pets interfere and conflict with legal trapping activities, there are already “trap free zones”. No other zones or areas restricted by “setbacks” are needed, as evidenced by the lack of statistically significant incidents that would indicate a need for trapping setbacks. The trappers were here first and city dwellers need to understand that they need to work around the trappers activities.

The recommendations made by the “Montana Backcountry Alliance” are unwarranted and not substantiated by any data that would support closures/setbacks on these 30+ areas. The number of domestic animals unintentionally caught in traps is statistically insignificant and children on skis are

probably not going to be caught in a foothold trap.

Recent immigrants to Montana and recreationists must get used to the idea of traps being present on the public landscape and adjust accordingly, just as the anti-consumer groups think that ranchers are supposed to get used to the idea of a certain amount of livestock losses to wolves and predators.

Having said that, I would leave it up to the anti-conservation/anti-trap groups such as Montana Backcountry Alliance, Trap Free Montana, Wolves of the Rockies, Footloose Montana, Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society to pool their resources and provide substantial public education so that the general public is aware of trapping activities and the benefits of trapping on public land. Let's see them put their money where their mouths are rather than infringing on trapping activities.

One issue that hasn't been mentioned yet is the hypocrisy (again) of the anti-trap/animal rights community. They claim trapping setbacks are needed because the traps "might" capture dogs and cats. This is a clear admission that these pets are roaming through the woods unsupervised and in violation of any leash laws that certain municipalities have enacted. Importantly, what is neglected to recognize was the effect these pets have on native species. What also is neglected to recognize is that the actions of irresponsible pet owners could indeed lead to the enactment of a statewide leash law - bird hunters and their hunting dogs, anyone?

The entire issue of trapping setbacks are coming from anti-trapping groups based out of the western part of the state, specifically in the Bitterroot Valley and Missoula, and these factions shouldn't dictate what happens for their County, let alone the entire state of Montana.

And Commissioners, for your consideration, as far as the anti's respecting trappers viewpoints for example, I don't particularly relish the idea of having a job or a career working in the sewers, or working as a caregiver, but I respect those that do. And though the non-consumers don't relish the idea of trapping sustainable furbearers and predators, they should respect those that do trap.

Given these circumstances, I am respectfully requesting that the Commission:

1. Impose a one year Sunset Clause for any motion dealing with trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails made at the August meeting;
2. Put out for Public Comment any motion at the August meeting that deals with imposing setbacks on excepted roads and trails and then vote on this motion at the December meeting;
3. Take no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails at the August meeting;
4. Let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply and play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and historical users, trappers, to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Respectfully, James Boyer

**197. From: Bobbie DuBose <bdubose@bellagroupinc.com>**

**Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:19 AM**

**To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020-2021 Furbearer Regulations & Trapping Setbacks**

Greetings, Commissioners.

In light of the upcoming deadline for comments RE: the above, I respectfully request that you adopt the proposed Montana Backcountry Alliance guidelines for trapping setbacks and exclusions.

As avid backcountry skiers and snowboarders who frequently take our beloved dog on our excursions, her safety and the safety of our fellow skiers' dogs is paramount.

We're not opposed to trapping, but trapping must be conducted in a manner safe for everyone who enjoys Montana's beautiful backcountry.

Kindest regards,

Bobbie, Gregory ad Jackson DuBose  
(and our beloved GSP Haile Ruth)

**Bobbie DuBose**  
Principal/COO

P: 561.746.6077 | C: 561.307.8030  
P.O. Box 1687, Bozeman, MT 59771

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198. *From: Pam Hogle <pam.hogle@gmail.com>*  
*Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:36:17 PM*  
*To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>*  
*CC: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

I've been horrified by the stories of dogs being harmed by traps on public lands in places where people walk dogs and hike --- with their families.

I find trapping to be a horrible and very unsporting method of hunting and would love to see it disappear from Montana altogether. But at the very least some common sense is needed, urgently!

If you're not moved by the death or pain of a dog, what would it take? Do we have to wait until a child is maimed to get traps off of our hiking paths and far from recreational areas?



Montana's appeal, to both residents and visitors, stems from its great outdoor spaces. Allowing a very small number of self-interested people to use our public spaces for their own violent ends does not benefit Montana or Montanans.

I am a taxpayer and proud Montanan. Why don't I get to enjoy my public spaces? Why should a tiny number of people ruin the outdoors for everyone?

We need safe, trap-free areas around all urban areas, trails, and recreational lands --- even far from the actual trails. Please don't wait until more people and pets are harmed by traps. Put safety zones and trap-free zones in place today.

Thank you,

Pamela Hogle

Missoula, Montana

*199. From: Jennifer Wiezel <jswiezel@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:22:37 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

PLEASE no traps on public land in Montana.

They are completely unnecessary, cruel and dangerous to all users of our public lands. It's a "sport" of bygone times that needs to end.

Thank you

Jennifer Wiezel

Sent from my iPhone

*200. From: Nancy Larson <wiselarson@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Sunday, July 26, 2020 12:30:15 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping*

PLEASE,PLEASE,PLEASE do not allow trapping so close to urban areas. especially with COVID-19 the outdoors is where we can safely go and it is not safe if there are traps there to catch our rambunctious children exploring the woods.

Thank you

Nancy Larson

missoula, mt

*201. From: Andrea Scholz <andreainbigsky@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:46:30 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>; FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
CC: Andrea Scholz <andreainbigsky@gmail.com>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping within Urban Interface*

Good Morning,

I am a resident of Gallatin County but also a Montanan.

I love the outdoors and when wandering this beautiful state, and we do regularly with our two dogs, would like to freely enjoy public lands whenever possible without worrying that my dogs, or even my husband and I, may get caught in a trap. Although people tend to stay on trails, lesser used trails can get "lost" and then bushwhacking is required. Areas used for recreation should be completely closed to trapping.

Why are there no safety zones for trapping?

I did not grow up in Montana but have lived in many states. No one in my family hunts but have begun to understand that hunting is a Montana sport that also gives a family food and compared to the general meat production can be more humane. But trapping, really? Cruel, certainly not sporting, and dangerous without any real purpose other than to bring some kind of enjoyment to a very small population.

I would urge you to seriously consider safety zones for all urban communities, and even go as far as planning to eliminate trapping on public lands altogether in future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Andrea Scholz

*202. From: Karina Li <karinabirgitta@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 12:29 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

Hi,

My name is Karina and I am emailing to urge you to follow the trapping regulation recommendations from Montana Backcountry Alliance. Please consider that backcountry skiers utilize closed roads in the wintertime and many ski with their dogs. I feel it is an appropriate compromise between skiers and trappers to evaluate popular skier locations where trappers cannot place traps directly on a closed road, considering that setbacks have recently been significantly decreased. I love Montana because many different types of wilderness users coexist all year long, despite having different motivations for being outdoors. Please support that coexistence by agreeing to accept this compromise.

Thank you,

Karina

Sent from my iPhone

*203.From: <bjhoy@localnet.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:16:18 AM  
To:FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
CC: bjhoy@localnet.com  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping regulations*

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission,

As a wildlife rehabber for 50 years, I know well the havoc and damage that a trap causes to non target mammals and birds, so I am certain of the pain and suffering a trap causes the animals for which the trappers set the traps. Therefore, I believe that allowing trappers to set traps in recreation areas that are used by ordinary people, their children and their dogs is totally unacceptable. With Montana's public lands being used even more now for people to get out and about and still stay away from people, the last thing they need is for their dogs or even their child to step in a trap. Therefore, it is important for you to establish areas and setbacks to protect the people who are out recreating on public lands.

By the way, the animals trappers target are worth far more for tourists and others to see and possibly photograph than they are dead. Trappers contribute far less to the economy than tourists and people just enjoying nature do. Also, some of the animals trapped are species of special concern and should be completely protected, like marten, kit foxes, wolverine, fisher and lynx, and so are some of the birds killed in traps, like Golden and Bald Eagles. Those animals alive and well are important to a great many of Montana's citizens. Only a few of

Montana's citizens are trappers, a very few. Why are such a small number of people allowed to cheat the rest of us out of enjoying our beautiful wildlife? I used to see bobcats and other now rare wildlife on our land, but not any more.

In and around urban areas, there should be safety zones, where no trapping is allowed, in addition to any place close to trails on public lands. People should have the right to enjoy their public lands without fear of having their child or pet harmed by traps. I would of course be happiest if all trapping were banned because I love the wildlife, but I know that for some reason MDFWP caters to trappers, even though most of the people I know that work for the MDFWP also love the animals. Many do important work to protect Montana's wildlife, so it is a total mystery to me why anyone is legally allowed to maim and torture a beautiful animal in a trap.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Sincerely,

Judy Hoy

*204. From: Sally Blevins <sallyandraven@yahoo.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:57:21 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>; FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping on Public Lands*

Thank you for accepting comments on this subject. I have been working on and enjoying the trails of Montana for the past forty years. Thus I have a lot of knowledge about who is on those trails, and the times of year that they visit. Recreation users far outnumber any other group; these include people with dogs and/or children all loving and exploring nature. None of them want their adventure in nature to end with their dog or child caught in a trap. I'm still amazed that as the Montana population grows, trapping continues. Please put an end to this barbaric recreational activity for these reasons:

- \* Recreational visitors bring far more money to the MT economy than trappers.
- \* Dogs and unintended wildlife species meet a tragic end in traps.

\* As Montana becomes more heavily populated, it is time to manage public lands with the well being of the visitors in mind.

\* No one is making their living off of trapping.

Thank you for protecting us and our families,  
Sally Blevins  
PO Box 2246  
Hamilton, MT 59840  
406-381-8763

*205. From: Carla Bonetti <carlabonetti@me.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:58:27 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
CC: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping in the Urban Interface*

Dear Commissioners -

I am a Missoula resident and home owner who loves to hike with my husband and two dogs. I want to encourage you to take action to create a safety zone in heavily used recreation areas. Setbacks are not enough, conflicts can easily occur because the setbacks you have approved are not adequate.

Why do trappers have the right to use easily accessed areas where non trappers recreate? It simply makes no sense. Block management is used in hunting and includes safety zones - it makes no sense that there are no safety zones for trapping. Public safety must be a priority!

Missoula's economy is very dependent on non-trapping recreation and the revenue generated by these activities. If revenue is what you seek, then raise the cost of a trapping license and make the fee PER TRAP!

My understanding is that less than 1% of Montana residents trap, and yet FWP allows trappers to control our public land. As a tax paying citizen, I strongly encourage the Commission to consider that this is 2020 and not the 1800's. Put an end to trapping in these highly used recreation areas.

Sincerely,

Carla Bonetti

Missoula, Montana

*206. From: Sheryl Hester <kiyoteekisses@comcast.net>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:26:21 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping in the urban interface of communities in Montana*

Dear FWP,

I am a 4th generation Montanan on both sides of my family. My family have been involved in the forest, ranching and farming industries throughout our generations. I myself was a lifetime outdoor enthusiast and rancher until the time I retired and moved to Arizona. I plan to move back to Missoula Montana in the near future but at the moment I am enjoying exploring the outdoors of the desert and viewing its wildlife.

I have found that I can view more wildlife in the desert than I did in Montana. It is not because it is a desert and open, it is because hunting is at a minimum and there are more animals to enjoy. I live in a community that is surrounded by desert, on a golf course that is bountiful in wildlife. We coexist. The wildlife bring many of us pleasure. We can sit on a hillside and watch the animals play below us. These animals are not threatened and are a delight to watch. It is something that is valued and is continuing to be appreciated by all. In the desert surrounding us animals run free and wild. There are organizations that help them.

When I lived in Montana I tried to do the same. I found great pleasure in viewing the animals there. My chances were much less of finding them. When I was a child I delighted to see the smallest to the largest, fishers, the mink, the weasels, the beaver, the coyotes, the mountain lions, the wolves, the moose, the badgers, the fox, the porcupines, skunks, the mountain goats the mountain sheep, the bear, etc. I spent much of my childhood in the forests with my father and grandfather or off riding my horse on my own. Studying them took my breath away as I gazed at them in wonder of their lives. As I grew older, I saw less and less of them. Even my ancestors appreciated them in the way that I do. They did not exploit them. Yes, they hunted deer and elk for food but didn't take it beyond that.

I keep abreast of the wildlife happenings in Montana. I donate to protect them.

When I move back, I hope to continue my wildlife viewing. I believe that there should be areas that the animals can live freely without fears. I have seen the utopias that are created here in the Southwest for them and know that Montana could follow their example. We are getting to an age to where animals are more appreciated for their viewing value. It is time for the FWP to change and work with us for this goal. I hope you will vote to protect them in urban settings where children can go up to appreciate them in the wonder that I did and that we retired folks can enjoy them as we did when we were children.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Hester

*207.From: leebridges <leebridges@montana.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:10:44 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
CC: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping in Missoula County*

To FWP and FWP Commissioners;

As a long time Missoula County resident and taxpayer, why is trapping going on in places I like to recreate with my friends and our pups?

Why are our public lands (that we help pay for) unsafe for us to use year around, all for the sake of a few trappers who indiscriminately trap our wildlife and family pets? This is Absolute Nonsense!

As a homeowner east of Missoula, I should be able to freely and safely enjoy our recreational areas outdoors without risking the lives and safety of my dogs, particularly in Marshall Canyon right down the road from me, Johnsrud Park, and Rock Creek areas.

We've all heard about the recent dog tragedy along the river in Missoula this past Winter. I know that trap was placed illegally, but I can't believe ANY traps are legal ANYwhere! How Barbaric!!! How are we to identify areas that have traps? How are we to know where the traps are placed? Why are we giving up our public freedoms and public access for the sake of this outdated practice by a few to satisfy their senseless need to inhumanely destroy innocent lives?

Please BAN trapping from public recreational areas throughout Missoula County!

Sincerely,

Lee Bridges

East Missoula, MT

Cc: Shane Colton, Chair

Tim Aldrich, Commissioner

Pat Byorth, Commissioner

Richard Stuker, Vice Chair

Logan Brower, Commissioner

*208. From: Dylan Flather <dylan.flather@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:54:28 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
CC: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping at the urban interface of communities in Western Montana*

I would like to voice my support for a trapping ban within urban and recreational hubs in and around Missoula and the Bitterroot Valley. I feel that public safety must become a priority in areas of higher population density and heavier recreational use. The economy of Western Montana is dependent upon outdoor recreation activities and active trapping is inconsistent with those who want to enjoy wildlife and open spaces with their children and pets free from the worry of live traps being nearby or encountering a suffering animal in a trap. A miniscule portion of the population of Montana traps and yet these folks have taken our public lands hostage. As a taxpayer, I have the right to enjoy the public lands I support without concern of live traps.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dylan Flather  
Hamilton, MT

*209. From: april christofferson <aprilchristoff@msn.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:39:01 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trap free urban and recreational areas*

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,



I am writing to plead with you to put an end to trapping in certain urban and recreational areas in and around Missoula. There have been enough tragic incidents recently to illustrate how important doing so is and just how important an issue this is to Missoulians--those with pets and those without.

It's just a matter of time before a child or adult is a victim of a trap. It's hard for me to fathom how it could even be controversial to take this minimal step to safeguard Montanans and their pets. Trappers have an entire state in which to set their traps. Do they really have that much power and influence over FWP that you are willing to ignore the safety and wishes of those who do not trap? Please outlaw trapping in areas such as fishing access areas along the Bitterroot and Clark Fork, Rock Creek, State Parks and Lolo trails. By doing so, not only would you be sparing citizens and pets from injury and even death, your credibility and respect within the community, including those of us who have long fought traps anywhere on public land in this state, would take a giant leap forward.

Sincerely,

April Christofferson

Lolo

**210. From: Sarah Stewart <sarahbstewart@yahoo.com>**

**Sent on: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:21:03 AM**

**To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Start Thoughtful and Thorough Trapping Management on Public Lands in Missoula**

Dear Commissioners of FWP Montana,

I am writing to ask that certain areas of Missoula public lands should be trapping-free. I believe that trapping is a cruel way for an animal to die and a danger to the public and their pets, so am generally opposed to its wide use on our Montana public lands.

However, I am writing about public and domestic animal safety in areas where there is a lot of public hiking and recreational use in the Missoula area. In particular I am concerned about trapping in recreational hubs in and around Missoula. Such hubs include Kelly Island, Council Grove State Park, Fishing Access Areas from Hamilton to Erskine, Johnsrud Park, Rock Creek from Eudailey's Bridge to the confluence of the Clark Fork and tributaries, Lolo Trails and Marshall Canyon.

Block management has been used for hunting and I don't understand why this style of management isn't also true for trapping. In areas of wide public use such as above, trapping should be eliminated.

The Montana economy, and Missoula economy in particular, is deeply dependant on outdoor recreational use and yet people are afraid of traps where they want to enjoy public lands. This doesn't make sense! There is no real economy based on trapping and yet trapping is allowed everywhere. Why is this true? Taxpayers should not be afraid to use public lands due to concern about traps. Please control trapping on public lands and stop trapping on much of public lands where there is any likely recreational use.

I appreciate your thoughtful attention to all my comments above.

In summary, it is time to manage trapping thorough and considered manner which fits with public land use.

Sincerely, Sarah Stewart, 1045 US highway 89 South, Gardiner, MT 59030

**211. From: Rebecca Murray <rmurray2010@yahoo.com>**

*Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:17:26 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
CC: wcomm@mt.gov  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO trapping in urban and recreational hubs!!!*

To Whom It May Concern,

Trapping should not be allowed where the community recreates. These areas are (but not limited to):

Kelly Island, Council Grove State Park, Fishing Access Areas from Hamilton to Erskine, Johnsrud Park, Rock Creek from Eudailey's Bridge to the confluence of the Clark Fork and tributaries, Lolo Trails and Marshall Canyon.

There are many important reasons why banning of trapping in these areas is so important...

Fish, Wildlife, and Parks should seriously look at large safety zones for urban communities. What does trapping contribute to the economy? No one makes a living off trapping. Block management is used in hunting, block management includes safety zones. Why are there no safety zones for trapping? This must be created. Too many family pets are paying the price for allowing trapping.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Rebecca Murray

Bozeman, MT

*212. From: vj <h2oshed1@hotmail.com>  
Sent on: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:50:33 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>; FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Need for trap free zones near towns*

Fish, Wildlife and Parks commissioners and others:

I urge you to make high use recreational areas near towns like Missoula, OFF LIMITS to trapping. This is an important safety issue for children and pets.

Near Missoula, the areas of greatest concern are:

Kelly Island, Council Grove State Park, Fishing Access Areas from Hamilton to Erskine, Johnsrud Park, Rock Creek from Eudailey's Bridge to the confluence of the Clark Fork and tributaries, Lolo Trails and Marshall Canyon.

Here is why these areas should be off limits to trapping:

- Trapping is not compatible with other recreational uses of public land near towns.
- Fish, Wildlife, and Parks should create large safety zones near urban communities.
- Block management safety zones are used to manage hunting. Block management safety zones where trapping is not allowed are also important to public safety.
- Recreation on public lands is a big part of Missoula's economy. It dwarfs any contribution from trapping.
- The US Forest Service designated 28,000 acres of the Rattlesnake NRA to be trap-free since 1980. FWP should follow this good example.
- We taxpayers want to enjoy our public lands without fearing for family or pets.

Thank you for your public service.

Vicki Watson, Missoula, MT

**213. From: Peg Brownlee <pegster153@hotmail.com>**  
**Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:11:57 PM**  
**To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>**  
**Subject: [EXTERNAL] End Trapping in Urban Interface Areas**

Dear FWP,

I would like to comment on the proposed ban on trapping in certain urban/public land interface areas used by recreationalists. I use these areas a lot with my dogs, but have the constant worry of them being caught in traps. Why is it that, with only 1/2 of 1% of the population (trappers) controls 99% of our public lands by their "recreational" activity? If it were any other activity causing this kind of harm, it would be disallowed. Revenues from trapping licenses are minimal. And no one earns their living or their food by trapping. It is unacceptable that trappers get this type of special treatment! I repeat, unacceptable!

I very much appreciate the collaboration of trappers, the public and FWP in the Larry Creek area to ban trapping there. I think there are other areas, such as Pattee Canyon, but I've only ever seen signs saying "no trapping" at Larry Creek. Why aren't there more signs in trap-free areas? And if trapping IS occurring in an area, why is it not posted as such?? The public has a right to know what is happening on their lands. FWP has a duty to the public to help prevent conflict in these areas.

Maclay Flats is a particularly dear area to me, and very heavily used. While dogs are supposed to be leashed there, and most are, often a person will let their dog off-leash at the river to get a drink. Little do they know that traps are set in that area (which I have personally seen). A disaster is waiting to happen.

I really appreciate that FWP and trappers are working with others to make our public lands safer for ALL users. I look forward to further efforts in this matter, and I urge you to create these "safe zones" for the majority of the recreationalists who use them, particularly in urban interface areas.  
Thank you for reading my comments.

Peg Brownlee  
Florence, MT

*214. From: MaryAnn Grenfell <magrenfell@outlook.com>  
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 9:00 PM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] set backs*

To Whom it may concern:

In regards to August 13, 2020 commission meeting please do not make any additional add-on's to the set backs regulations without our trapper input. If you close off trapping on closed roads it will be really hard to trap any wolves unless you have bait piles to draw them in. At 150 ft set back is almost impossible to pull wolves into the sets. As they use the roads as their main highways. Most of the roads in the mountains where we are trapping at, about the only ones out there are hound hunters, which I am one also. If you want increased harvest in the state you need to do something about these set back regulations. I can see at trail heads and recreation areas and ski areas you should apply where high traffic of people. These areas where no people are around should be able to go back to the old regulations.

Thank you,

Gary W. Grenfell

5131 Pipe Creek Rd.

Libby, Mt. 59923

406-293-7582

*215. From: Clarence Sanders  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Trapping Regulations in Montana  
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:19:18 AM*

Hello,

My name is Clarence Sanders, and I reside in Bozeman, MT.

I write to comment on, and strongly oppose, indiscriminate and essentially unregulated trapping in Montana.

It is clear that unregulated and widespread trapping is not consistent with life in an urban, civilized society.

Trapping is a threat to human recreation activities, to pets, and more generally is an inhumane practice. Moreover, trapping is not needed, as we have a developed fur farming industry to serve the needs of the fashion industry.

I support and join with efforts of organizations seeking the restriction of trapping in public recreation areas around Missoula, and other urban areas of Montana.

Some of these organizations, among others, include Footloose Montana, WildEarth Guardians, and the Humane Society of Western Montana.

Below are a few reasons why trapping should be banned in recreation areas where there is a demonstrated threat to public safety.

> The state establishes safety zones for hunting, and it is obvious that the same regulatory policy should apply to trapping.

> Indiscriminate, deadly traps have no place in our urban recreation areas.

> Too many family pets are injured or killed in traps (how would you feel if it was your young daughter's pet dog that died an agonizing death in a trap.)

> Recreation is a \$7 billion industry in Montana, and people (both residents and tourists) deserve access to public recreation areas without fear of traps.

Please do the right thing, take the proper regulatory action, and ban trapping from public recreation areas in Montana.

Thank you,

Clarence Sanders

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<https://www.oeclassic.com/> [oeclassic.com]

216. *From: Mark Egge*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping setbacks*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:59:57 PM*

FWP Commissioners,

I'm writing to ask you to adopt the trap setbacks submitted by the Montana Backcountry Alliance to protect skiers and riders with dogs and to reduce user conflict in the backcountry.

Mark Egge

542 N Black Ave

Bozeman, MT 59715

217. *From: Dorothy Filson*

*To: FWP Wildlife*

*Cc: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on trapping guidelines*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:31:49 PM*

Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments related to trapping regulations in Montana and how they effect our economy, lifestyles and their impact in Montana going forward.

Montana is one of the few places remaining that has enough and varied wildlife species that it comprises an important part of our economy. Thousands of locals and out-of-state visitors enjoy being out on Montana public lands due to the possibility for wildlife viewing.

Those activities generate \$7.1 billion to local economies and create over 70,000 jobs, equal to \$2.2 billion in wages for economies. This is taken from the 2017 Headwaters Economic Report.

However, those revenues are adversely impacted when people stay away after they become aware of the safety dangers to themselves and their pets due to trapping on public lands.

Less than ½ of 1% of Montanans trap, yet they are holding 99% of public lands hostage from the enjoyment of those lands.

And, those realities translate into a significant loss of revenue to Montana's economy, if people are not out freely recreating on those public lands.

No one makes a living from trapping. Many are stockpiling thousands of pelts in the hope the demand for them will come back, since it is currently in a steep freefall.

The damage caused by trapping in Montana is incalculable due to the loss of non-target wildlife and people's pets who are killed or maimed.

As a taxpayer, I should be able to enjoy being out on public lands without the fear that I, or a companion animal, could be endangered by stepping in a cluster of traps.

Yes, trappers set traps in clusters, hidden under leaves or needles, so, if an animal hears the distress calls of their mate and comes to investigate, it, too, steps into a trap.

And, when the parents die or languish in a trap, their young starve to death.

This is a public safety issue plain and simple, especially around urban areas or areas of high recreational use.

Those areas should be closed entirely for trapping similar to block management for hunting.

28,000 acres have been set aside in the Rattlesnake NRA near Missoula to be trap-free. This was done by the FS, yet FWP continues to allow trapping on public lands. It's time for this to stop.

Not only is trapping a threat to the safety of those recreating on public lands, but we must think forward to preserve rare, fragile and endangered species that we, in Montana, are still fortunate to have.

That may not always be the case. The indiscriminate nature of trapping poses many perils for the protection of the wildlife we enjoy.

When I visit with people who have come here from other parts of the country or other countries, they are appalled that trapping is still even allowed in Montana.

In some places, it went by the wayside decades, even centuries ago.

They are surprised that we are not doing everything we can to preserve the wildlife we have.

Frankly, I'm not sure how to even answer them, it is so senseless. It gives Montana a barbaric reputation.

I grew up on a ranch in Broadwater Co. and have been in the woods my entire life. Yet, now, going

**Comments should be emailed to [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov)**

**They should also be cc'd to all five commissioners: [fwcomm@mt.gov](mailto:fwcomm@mt.gov)**

It is important to make your comments unique, the agency will toss redundancy.

The commission must look beyond just trails and setbacks in their consideration of closures. We must close entire areas that are used for recreation.

The US Forest Service put aside 28,000 acres of the Rattlesnake NRA to be trap-free. It has been that way since 1980. Yet Fish, Wildlife and Parks continue to grant trappers free reign on our public lands. The precedent has been set by the FS, it's time for FWP to act.

**Remember the deadline is Tuesday at 5 pm.**

into wooded areas is a totally different experience.

Gone are the chattering and chirping and brush crashing as animals bounded away. In many areas, it is now like walking through a graveyard.

Let's preserve what we have left while we have it, as it is on the brink of disappearing.

Thank you,

Dorothy Filson

PO Box 553  
Bozeman MT 59771

218. *From: [info@tfmpl.org](mailto:info@tfmpl.org)  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020 Trapping Proposal 24 hr/daily Trap Checks  
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:28:06 PM  
Attachments: [sigimg0](#)*

Dear Chairman Colton, Commissioners, Director Williams,  
We continue to ask that you require 24 hr or, at most, daily trap checks. Montanans have been requesting this from FWP and the Commission since at least the late 1990s. The first, and then the second and most recent, Trapping Advisory Council wrestled among themselves at length with this significant issue and still could not come to a consensus. They, too, tried to avoid this assignment. Yet, year after year, we cannot even get it open for public comment. Why? These are everyone's wildlife.

What about a poll? A survey?

Today's trapper isn't a mountain man or a poor family man trying to scrape by who would be forced to check traps in very inclement weather. Speaking personally from my family's experience of hardship and trapping, if they were, they would be checking their traps and often. Besides, the more you check, the more that can be trapped.

According to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) survey, "Just under a quarter of trappers (21%) responded that their trapping has been a very or somewhat important source of income over the past 3 years. The large majority of them (78%) say it has not been at all important."

As fur prices continue to go down, more trappers are doing it for recreational purposes. As a trapper told an inquisitive woman who stumbled upon them, "It's just something to do." It shouldn't just be something to do leaving trapped animals to suffer. If someone is trapping for conflict resolution, then they should be responsible enough checking their traps to make sure they got their target. Your staff, biologists, scientists check every 12-24 hrs or constantly. Unlike our trapping season, they often don't trap in the winter to avoid the added risks.

**The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies** makes it very clear in their trapper education manual, *"Make a commitment to check your traps at least once every day. When you set out a trapline, you assume responsibilities. Animal welfare is a top priority. Most furbearers are nocturnal, so it is best to check your live-restraining traps at first light each morning. If you cannot check them at daylight, check them as early in the day as possible. One important difference between trapping and hunting is your commitment to work your trapline every day until you remove your traps. Hunters can choose the days they want to hunt, but trappers must check their sets every day. Bad weather or other problems should not change your plans. If you cannot personally fulfill your responsibility to wildlife and fellow trappers because of illness have another licensed trapper check your line."*

36 states have 24hr/daily trap checks within their trapping regulations. These include Washington, Colorado, New York, Arizona, Vermont, New Mexico, Minnesota. Why can't Montana?

The two major objections to trapping are the prolonged suffering and the indiscriminate nature. They are also related. The costs of incidentals, non-target captures, are further exacerbated when they have been trapped for long periods of time. The evidence is solid. The longer the animal is trapped the greater the damage. Found alive, running, or flying away after release, does not mean they will survive. Wildlife rehabbers can vow for this. If the injuries don't wind up killing them, capture myopathy often does, even weeks later.

We have heard repeatedly that it wouldn't or couldn't be enforced. How then are the 48 hr trap check requirements for wolves and in designated lynx habitat for bobcats? Law abiding citizens follow the laws. Criminals do not. As we were instructed in the wolf trapping course, do the right thing even if no one is watching.

**Lastly, the Best Management Practices (BMPs)** so often spoken of and ascribed to be part of Montana trapper education, recommends 24 hr/daily trap checks. The AFWA survey found:

Of Montana trappers, 44% said yes to supporting BMPs.

Asked what are the main reasons you support best management practices? (Asked of those who support BMPs.)

**Majority (34%) say for Humane / ethical / animal welfare**

**Attached is a link** for your review of many reasons we need 24 hr/daily trap checks in Montana. <https://tfmpl.org/featured/why-should-we-have-24-hr-daily-trap-checks> [tfmpl.org]

**[tfmpl.org]**At the bottom of the page, Carter Niemeyer, a hunter and trapper of 60 years, a Montana resident for 26, a wildlife biologist, government trapper and USDA/USFWS retiree after over 30 years, wrote a letter, on our behalf, to the Montana legislators, defending the need for 24 hr trap checks.

Thank you,

KC York/President

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our constituents

Trap Free Montana Public Lands

Promoting ethics, the best available science & responsible stewardship for trapping reform.

We partner with our sister organization, Trap Free Montana, a 501-c3, educational charitable organization.

Trap Free Montana Public Lands [tfmpl.org], Inc.

PO Box 1347

Hamilton, Montana 59840

406-218-1170

[www.tfmpl.org](http://www.tfmpl.org) [tfmpl.org]

**219. From: [Margareta Marro](#)**

**To: [FWP Commission](#)**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping - setback exception on "closed" roads**

**Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:22:29 PM**

Dear commissioners and FW Department,

It is sad to see that our FW department once again, after the bill HB552 was killed, works hard to support their trapper friends and ignores us the non trappers.

Have they considered that on closed roads, people walk and hike with their little kids, grand kids and pets? Did the thought occurred to them that because it's a closed road, kids and pets are running around, enjoying and exploring our wildness? Did they consider people cross country skiing and horse back riding? Probably not. But you should as all of us who enjoy the things listed above are being represented by you, the Commissioners.

Please consider the comment and do not allow any exceptions of setbacks.

Thank you.

Best Regards,

Margareta Marro

**220. From: [Natasha Osborn](#)**

**To: [FWP Commission](#)**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Closed road trapping set backs**



*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:38:10 PM*

To the FWP Commissioners...

Please require set back rules to apply to closed dirt roads!! I recreate on many roads in winter with my dogs and don't want to be terrified of encountering traps. Closed roads are easy to access and perfect for skiing, snowshoeing and hiking. There are millions of acres open to trapping closed roads should not be included because the public uses them too much. Thank you for doing the right thing and keeping the public and their families safe.

221. *From: tim wetherill*

*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] trapping in Montana*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:41:36 PM*

1. please abolish trapping, there is no value to this barbaric activity as we do not need to harvest fur  
2. if trapping will not be banned outright we must act to ensure that this activity of a few does not hinder safe access to public lands for the rest of us  
mandatory 24 hour trap checks are necessary  
setback from minor used trails must be at least 100 yards  
trapping on major trail systems must be forbidden  
trappers must be liable for injury to any person or pet  
currently trapping is performed on the continental divide trail making one of the most iconic national trail networks harmful to users  
in an era where outdoor activity is paramount to creating a safer, healthy society, trapping is an unnecessary hindrance to progress  
thank you  
Tim Wetherill MD  
Helena MT

222. *From: Pam Hogle*

*To: FWP Wildlife*

*Cc: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:36:47 PM*

I've been horrified by the stories of dogs being harmed by traps on public lands in places where people walk dogs and hike --- with their families.

I find trapping to be a horrible and very unsporting method of hunting and would love to see it disappear from Montana altogether. But at the very least some common sense is needed, urgently!

If you're not moved by the death or pain of a dog, what would it take? Do we have to wait until a child is maimed to get traps off of our hiking paths and far from recreational areas?

Montana's appeal, to both residents and visitors, stems from its great outdoor spaces. Allowing a very small number of self-interested people to use our public spaces for their own violent ends does not benefit Montana or Montanans.

I am a taxpayer and proud Montanan. Why don't I get to enjoy my public spaces? Why should a tiny number of people ruin the outdoors for everyone?

We need safe, trap-free areas around all urban areas, trails, and recreational lands --- even far from the actual trails. Please don't wait until more people and pets are harmed by traps. Put safety zones and trap-free zones in place today.

Thank you,

Pamela Hogle

Missoula, Montana

*223. From: Jennifer Wiesel  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping  
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:23:02 PM*

PLEASE no traps on public land in Montana.

They are completely unnecessary, cruel and dangerous to all users of our public lands. It's a "sport" of bygone times that needs to end.

Thank you

Jennifer Wiesel

Sent from my iPhone

*224. From: Carla Bonetti  
To: FWP Wildlife  
Cc: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping in the Urban Interface  
Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:56:30 AM*

Dear Commissioners -

I am a Missoula resident and home owner who loves to hike with my husband and two dogs. I want to encourage

you to take action to create a safety zone in heavily used recreation areas. Setbacks are not enough, conflicts can

easily occur because the setbacks you have approved are not adequate.

Why do trappers have the right to use easily accessed areas where non trappers recreate? It simply makes no sense.

Block management is used in hunting and includes safety zones - it makes no sense that there are no safety zones for

trapping. Public safety must be a priority!

Missoula's economy is very dependent on non-trapping recreation and the revenue generated by these activities. If

revenue is what you seek, then raise the cost of a trapping license and make the fee PER TRAP!

My understanding is that less than 1% of Montana residents trap, and yet FWP allows trappers to control our public

land. As a tax paying citizen, I strongly encourage the Commission to consider that this is 2020 and not the 1800's.

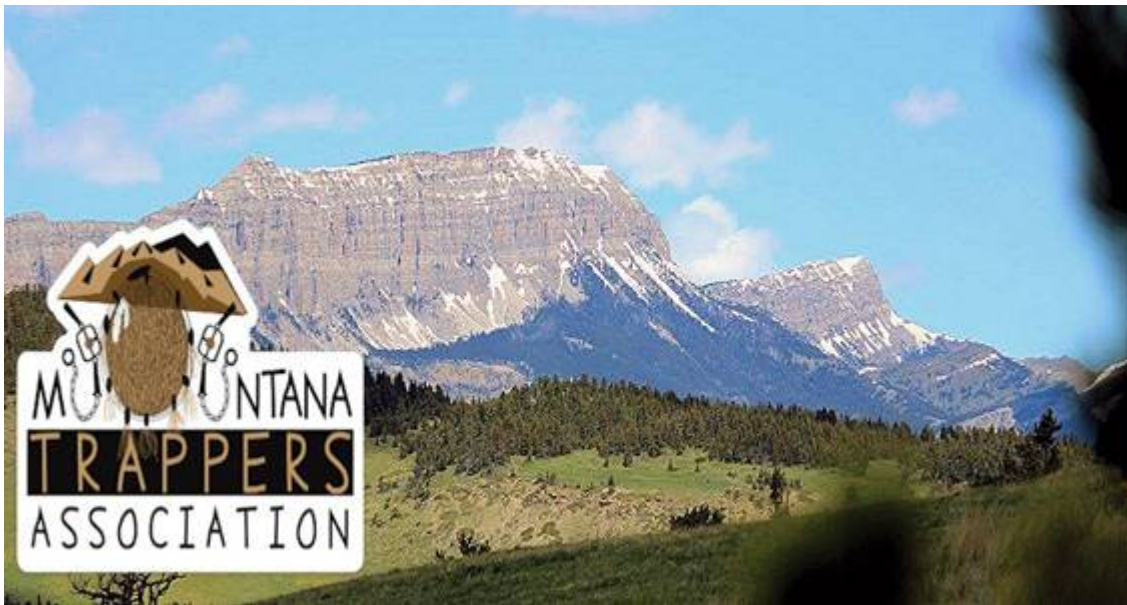
Put an end to trapping in these highly used recreation areas.

Sincerely,

Carla Bonetti

Missoula, Montana

*225. From: Todd Green <todd@bretzrv.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:02 AM  
To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Set backs for trapping*



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Dear Commissioners,

Once again, the anti-trap, non-consumptive user groups are forcing the Commission to look at a solution in search of a problem.

Regarding the issue of setbacks in areas where city people and their unleashed/uncontrolled domestic pets interfere and conflict with legal trapping activities, there are already "trap free zones". No other zones or areas restricted by "setbacks" are needed, as evidenced by the lack of statistically significant incidents that would indicate a need for trapping setbacks. The trappers were here first and city dwellers need to understand that they need to work around the trappers activities.

The recommendations made by the "Montana Backcountry Alliance" are unwarranted and not substantiated by any data that would support closures/setbacks on these 30+ areas. The number of domestic animals unintentionally caught in traps is statistically insignificant and children on skis are probably not going to be caught in a foothold trap.

Recent immigrants to Montana and recreationists must get used to the idea of traps being

present on the public landscape and adjust accordingly, just as the anti-consumer groups think that ranchers are supposed to get used to the idea of a certain amount of livestock losses to wolves and predators.

Having said that, I would leave it up to the anti-conservation/anti-trap groups such as Montana Backcountry Alliance, Trap Free Montana, Wolves of the Rockies, Footloose Montana, Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society to pool their resources and provide substantial public education so that the general public is aware of trapping activities and the benefits of trapping on public land. Let's see them put their money where their mouths are rather than infringing on trapping activities.

One issue that hasn't been mentioned yet is the hypocrisy (again) of the anti-trap/animal rights community. They claim trapping setbacks are needed because the traps "might" capture dogs and cats. This is a clear admission that these pets are roaming through the woods unsupervised and in violation of any leash laws that certain municipalities have enacted. Importantly, what is neglected to recognize was the effect these pets have on native species. What also is neglected to recognize is that the actions of irresponsible pet owners could indeed lead to the enactment of a statewide leash law - bird hunters and their hunting dogs, anyone?

The entire issue of trapping setbacks are coming from anti-trapping groups based out of the western part of the state, specifically in the Bitterroot Valley and Missoula, and these factions shouldn't dictate what happens for their County, let alone the entire state of Montana.

And Commissioners, for your consideration, as far as the anti's respecting trappers viewpoints for example, I don't particularly relish the idea of having a job or a career working in the sewers, or working as a caregiver, but I respect those that do. And though the non-consumers don't relish the idea of trapping sustainable furbearers and predators, they should respect those that do trap.

Given these circumstances, I am respectfully requesting that the Commission:

1. Impose a one year Sunset Clause for any motion dealing with trapping setbacks on excepted roads and trails made at the August meeting;
2. Put out for Public Comment any motion at the August meeting that deals with imposing setbacks on excepted roads and trails and then vote on this motion at the December meeting;
3. Take no final action on imposing trapping setbacks on excepted roads or trails at the August meeting;
4. Let the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks plan for identifying where trapping setbacks apply and play out in a manner which will allow all land managers and historical users, trappers, to have an equal voice in determining where the trapping setbacks will be applied.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Respectfully, Todd Green

Todd Green

406-880-0143

[todd@bretzrv.com](mailto:todd@bretzrv.com)

[http://www.bretzrv.com/Bio\\_Todd.aspx](http://www.bretzrv.com/Bio_Todd.aspx) [bretzrv.com]

226. *From: Montana Backcountry <montanabackcountry@gmail.com>*

*Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 7:21 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Cc: Kujala, Quentin <qkujala@mt.gov>; McDonald, Ken <kmcdonald@mt.gov>; Williams, Martha <Martha.Williams@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: trapping setbacks*

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

We are resubmitting this comment on the 2020 Furbearer regulations to ensure that it is part of the record during the official public comment period. On behalf of the backcountry skiing community, we appreciate the Commission's interest in preventing user conflict between the trapping community and skiers with dogs.

On Sun, Jun 21, 2020 at 10:19 AM Montana Backcountry <[montanabackcountry@gmail.com](mailto:montanabackcountry@gmail.com)> wrote:

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

June 20, 2020

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Montana Backcountry Alliance, we are responding to your directive of October 17, 2019 pertaining to **trapping setbacks** on closed roads, and specifically, your request for explicit areas where trapping without a significant setback may result in increased conflict with other winter recreationists. (See enclosed cover sheet.) We appreciate your willingness to revisit the issue.

The Montana Backcountry Alliance (MBA) is a statewide group formed in 2005 representing the backcountry ski, snowboard, Nordic ski and snowshoe community. Our mission is to preserve quality traditional human-powered winter recreation experiences, reduce conflict, improve opportunity, and promote safety among backcountry winter users in Montana. We have over 1,000 members and supporters in (mostly) western Montana.

Many of our members like to ski, snowboard or snowshoe with their dogs in the winter, and we typically use trails and open or closed (administratively, or closed by snow) roads to access the backcountry. Traps placed directly upon a road or trail, or with only a minimal setback, places our dogs – and potentially even our youngest skiers – at risk of serious injury in a trap.

In response to your request at the October 2019 meeting, we have consulted some of our organizational leaders and backcountry skiers in the Flathead, Missoula and Bozeman areas, and we have compiled a list of some of the most frequently and regularly skied roads, trails and areas in western Montana. For each area, we have suggested a larger, more appropriate setback. In many cases where recreational use is extremely high, and where road densities are so high as to preclude setbacks, we have suggested the road or area be closed to trapping entirely in order to reduce conflict between winter recreationists.

In addition, we are urging the Department to retain the Bozeman area setbacks that were previously adopted and which are currently part of the trapping regulations.

Our list of requested closures and setbacks is attached for your review, along with a copy of our previous comment to the Commission last August.

In submitting this request, we recognize that virtually the entire public domain in western Montana is available for trapping, yet there are only a handful of areas that are suitable and accessible for backcountry skiing in the winter. So, in the interest of reducing user-conflict on our public lands, we urge the Department to incorporate our requested setbacks and closures into the trapping regulations as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Montana Backcountry Alliance  
Greg Peters, President

--

**Montana Backcountry Alliance**

P.O. Box 8691  
Missoula, MT 59807

--

**Montana Backcountry Alliance**

P.O. Box 8691  
Missoula, MT 59807

*227. From: Paul C Fielder  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oppose more trapping setbacks  
Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 3:26:23 PM*

To the Montana FWP Commissioners,

As a retired wildlife biologist of 31 years, a life member of the Montana Trappers Association, and the next member of the Montana House of Representatives from House District #13 in NW Montana, I ask you to please oppose any additional trapping setback rule making by you Commissioners until the FWP completes a plan for identifying where trapping setbacks may and may not apply and that plan goes through a public review process.

Although grizzly bears maul and injure and even kill Montanans every year, the FWP continues to transplant these bear around Montana each year and declares that "Montana is grizzly bear country, be bear aware". Well Montana has been trapping country since Lewis and Clark came up the river. The first business establishments in Montana were fur trading houses. So, shouldn't FWP also be declaring "Montana is trapping country – be trap aware"?

I ask you to please review the MANY existing trap closure areas and trapping set back regulations that ALREADY EXIST in the Montana Furbearers and Trapping regulations (all of page 5 and the bottom of page 6). Many times administrators make new rules, laws, and restrictions without ever knowing that similar restrictions already do exist. Don't let that be YOU.

Please, take no final action on trapping setbacks on roads and trails at the August meeting.

It is time for the Commissioners of the MFW&P to start supporting the people that are buying trapping licenses, the people that are doing the service of controlling wildlife problems for the

citizens of Montana, the people that are critical in controlling the plague on deer, elk, and moose populations known as the WOLF. Stop treating trappers as the ugly stepchild of wildlife management while favoring all of the animal rights groups who actually contribute nothing to wildlife management.

If the MFW&P continues to try restricting the trappers in Montana out of existence, Montana will have a wildlife management mess similar to Massachusetts, Washington, and California. Please learn from the mistakes that other states have made. Manage this state's wildlife with wildlife management science and the advice of wildlife professionals. Do not allow wildlife management that is based on emotion.

Respectfully,

Paul C Fielder, Thompson Falls

Retired Wildlife Biologist

Montana Trappers Association – life member, trapper education instructor, past MTA Director for Region 1

The next Montana Representative for House District #13 and the next member of the House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

[\[avast.com\]](http://avast.com)

This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.

[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com) [\[avast.com\]](http://avast.com)

**228. From: [rattpak@centurytel.net](mailto:rattpak@centurytel.net)**

**To: FWP Commission**

**Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping Proposals Comment**

**Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 6:08:23 PM**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed trapping regulations. As you know, trapping a misunderstood management method that many people think involves cruel methods that torture the animals for weeks. Many do not understand that trapping is a management tool that is vital for sound game management.

I can understand the need to have setbacks on roads that are used for public recreation on a regular basis. Trappers do not want to trap on roads that are used regularly especially if the people have their pet dogs in tow. In the first place, trappers probably have and love more dogs than most other people. Secondly, catching a dog takes the trap out of contention for the target animal and the activity would deter any target animals from using the area anyway.

One potential problem that I can see is the proposals to ban all trapping in areas is that there could easily be a depredation problem in these areas and there would be no way to address that. It is a far smarter proposal to enforce a setback from a road, knowing that there probably won't be any trappers working that area because there are people recreating in that area. I do not support any entire closures. This is simply asking for trouble. People who are recreating should have some responsibility to follow rules and the leash laws are a prime example.

Trappers are willing to work with the Department, as usual. But this is all being pushed into regulations with very little notice to any of the trappers and none to those who do not belong to one of the trapping organizations unless they follow the Commission agenda. If the Commission decides to enact any setbacks, there should be a one year sunset on the regulations to reexamine the impact on people. It is easy to forget that the trappers are the ones who



are working with the Department to manage our game and fur bearer populations when we have so many voices screaming that trapping is evil. Roads that are closed to any wheeled vehicle traffic should be open for trapping without setbacks until the road is opened again. Wolves, coyotes and bobcats all travel roads because it is the path of least resistance. The idea of large setbacks puts the trap out of the sensory reach of most predators and is a ploy used by anti-trappers to reduce the catch of predators. There are many miles of roads which have minimal if any usage even when the roads are open. Most roads that are open for part of the year have the dates set on the signs. Wolf trappers are checking their traps every other day and would see a sign if there were an area that did not have set dates.

Wolves are far over the agreed upon quotas and we need to stop overprotecting them until they are close to those numbers.

It is imperative that trappers be involved in choosing which roads have an increased setback because the anti trappers have shown that they have no qualms in using a little "poetic license" (AKA Lying) to achieve their uninformed goals. You can be sure that they will ask for everything within the state's boundaries. Any proposals should be sent out for public comment and a decision should be postponed until December at the earliest.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts,

Larry Rattray  
Proctor, Montana

**229. From: *Strong, Zack***

**To: *FWP Wildlife; FWP Commission***

**Cc: *Dipman, Madison***

**Subject: *[EXTERNAL] NRDC Comments Re 2020 Furbearer Trapping Regulations and Quotas***

**Date: *Tuesday, July 28, 2020 1:06:46 PM***

**Attachments: *NRDC Comments Re MT FWP 2020-21 Trapping Regulations 7-28-20.pdf***

Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission,  
Attached are comments from the Natural Resources Defense Council regarding the 2020 trapping regulations. Thank you for your consideration.

Zack

**ZACK STRONG**

*Staff Attorney*

*Director, Carnivore Conservation*

*Northern Rockies, Nature Program*

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

317 E. Mendenhall St., Suites D and E

Bozeman, MT 59715

(406) 556-9302

[zstrong@nrdc.org](mailto:zstrong@nrdc.org)





July 28, 2020

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Wildlife Division  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Submitted via: [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov)  
[fwcomm@mt.gov](mailto:fwcomm@mt.gov)

**Re: 2020 Furbearer Trapping Regulations and Quotas**

Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission:

On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (“NRDC”) and our thousands of members and supporters in Montana, we appreciate the opportunity to submit the following comments regarding Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks’ (“FWP”) proposed 2020 Furbearer Trapping Regulations and Quotas.

**I. FWP Should Consult Additional Stakeholders.**

In developing its proposed trapping regulations, FWP should contact and seek comments from a wider range of interested stakeholders. This year, for example, FWP is proposing to make regulatory changes regarding swift foxes. In its “supporting information” document, FWP explains that, prior to presenting this proposal to the Commission, the agency discussed it with the Fort Peck Tribes Fish and Wildlife agency.<sup>1</sup> FWP also contacted the “vice president east” and made efforts to “ensure changes were known by the trapper’s association.” Presumably the latter two references are to the Montana Trappers Association. FWP does not indicate that it attempted to contact any other stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup> See FWP Hunting Season/Quota Change Supporting Information for Swift Fox (May 2020), p. 5.

This is surprising, given how many other public organizations have demonstrated a clear interest in trapping and the impacts it has on Montana’s wildlife. These include NRDC, the Humane Society of the United States, Footloose Montana, Trap Free Montana Public Lands, Wolves of the Rockies, Montana Audubon, Montana Backcountry Alliance, Montana Wildlife Federation, Montana Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and others. Yet it does not appear that any of these organizations were contacted or consulted. <sup>2</sup>

Under Montana law, “[t]he responsibility of [FWP’s] Wildlife Division is to protect, enhance, and regulate the wise use of the state’s wildlife resources for *public benefit* now and in the future.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, FWP must ensure that its management decisions benefit the public as a whole, not just particular constituencies. The Montana Trappers Association represents a small fraction of the Montana public, and is only one public group among many in our state that is concerned with trapping and its effects on wildlife. FWP has a responsibility to consult with other interested stakeholders as well.

<sup>2</sup> See A.R.M. § 12.1.101(10) (emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix; see also trapping regulations for Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Alberta, available at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/parks-culture-heritage-and-sport/hunting-trapping-and-angling/trapping>; <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/tmp/hunting-trapping-synopsis-2018-2020.pdf>; and <http://albertaregulations.ca/pdfs/trapping-regs/Regulations.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix.

NRDC has commented on Montana's trapping regulations for several years. One of our staff members also served on the 2018 Montana Trapping Advisory Council, which discussed a wide range of trapping-related issues. As such, NRDC would welcome and appreciate the opportunity to consult with FWP about regulatory proposals being considered in the future.

## **II. FWP Should Require Traps to Be Checked at Least Once Each Day.**

Although FWP has not proposed any specific changes regarding trap inspections this year, we continue to urge FWP and the Fish and Wildlife Commission ("Commission") to consider the adoption of a 24-hour or daily trap check requirement for all restraining traps (including foothold traps and foot snares) and kill traps (including Conibear traps and neck snares) set for all species in the state of Montana.

Such a requirement is needed for several reasons.

First, Montana is out of step with—and behind—the majority of states and the neighboring Canadian provinces. It is one of only three states in the country with no general trap check requirement. The other two are North Dakota and Alaska.<sup>3</sup> Every other state that allows recreational trapping, as well as all three Canadian provinces that border Montana, require that traps and snares be regularly inspected.<sup>4</sup> Second, daily trap check requirements are common. Thirty-six states have adopted 24-hour or daily trap inspection requirements for at least some types of traps or trapping situations.<sup>5</sup> These include western states like Washington, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado.

Third, numerous scientific studies indicate that 24-hour or daily trap inspections would help reduce the severity of injuries inflicted on captured animals (e.g., Proulx et al. 1994; Halstead et al. 1995; Andelt et al. 1999; Iossa et al. 2007; Cattet et al. 2008). Long restraint time is associated with increased exertion, struggling, injury, swelling, dehydration, starvation, effects of 3

exposure (such as hypothermia and (for nocturnal animals) sunlight<sup>6</sup>), exhaustion, and capture myopathy (physiological imbalances following extreme struggle and stress).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Nocturnal species that are trapped in Montana include bobcats, raccoons, beavers, muskrat, mink, marten, wolverine, and swift fox. See Foresman, K. R. (2012). *Mammals of Montana* (2nd ed.). Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Pub.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Welfare Outcomes of Leg-Hold Trap Use in Victoria. (2008). Nocturnal Wildlife Research Pty Ltd., p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Id.

<sup>9</sup> See [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/sa\\_reports/sa\\_pdrs](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/sa_reports/sa_pdrs); Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Incidental Captures of Wildlife and Domestic Dogs in Montana, 2012 - 2017 (provided July 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Those species with an asterisk (\*) following their name are currently designated as “species of concern” in Montana. Grizzly bears and lynx are also listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. From records provided by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, it is not clear which raptors were captured; multiple raptor species are designated as species of concern in the state.

<sup>11</sup> See Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Trapper Education Manual, p. 97 (2005).

<sup>12</sup> Philip P. Massaro with Philip J. Massaro (Skyhorse Publishing 2020), pp. 5-6.

Importantly, this is true for both those traps designed to restrain and for those traps designed to kill. That is because killing traps and snares do not always kill animals quickly. If an animal is a “non-target” species or enters the trap from an “improper” angle, the animal might trigger the trap in ways that result in the trap crushing nonlethal areas of the body. For example, one study described martens caught in Conibears by the lower abdomen and legs, rather than by the neck, resulting in death hours or days after capture (Proulx et al. 2019). The same study also documented a wolf and a coyote each caught in a killing neck snare. They lost consciousness after struggling for more than three hours, and more than 14 hours, respectively.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, requiring that traps be checked each day would also reduce injury to, and unintentional mortality of, non-target species. Between 2012 and 2017, traps and snares in Montana unintentionally captured, injured, or killed at least 103 mountain lions, 12 black bears, three grizzly bears,\* six wolves, 25 bobcats, 36 river otters, five wolverines,\* three lynx,\* three fishers,\* three swift foxes,\* seven red foxes, 12 deer, one elk, one moose, one pronghorn antelope, eight raptors,\* six badgers, and 156 domestic dogs, among other species.<sup>9, 10</sup> These are just the reported incidents. Requiring traps to be checked frequently would increase the chances that these animals would be released alive and less seriously injured.

Fifth, wildlife professionals support daily trap inspections. Proulx et al. 2012 states, “All killing and restraining traps should be monitored within a 24-hour period to minimize pain and discomfort.” The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Trapper Education Manual urges trappers to “make a commitment to check your traps at least once every day” in order to reduce suffering, more quickly release non-target animals, and actually improve success (by, for example, reducing the chance of predation on an animal caught in a trap).<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the authors of the recently published book *Trapping 101: A Complete Guide to Taking Furbearing Animals* make clear that frequent trap checks are an important aspect of ethical trapping, stating, “Leaving an animal in a trap because you’re tired, preoccupied, or otherwise committed is no excuse; you need to be dedicated to checking your trap line twice a day, and if that isn’t a possibility, spring or pull your traps.”<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in his book *Being Kind to Animal Pests: A No-Nonsense Guide to Humane Animal Control with Cage Traps*, Stephen 4

Vantassel (who also served on the Montana Trapping Advisory Committee) writes, “The cardinal rule of any trapping activity is ‘Never leave a trap unchecked for over 24 hours!’”<sup>13</sup> Also, Hunter Ed, an online hunter education curriculum approved by the International Hunter Education Association, instructs, “When you set traps, you make a commitment to check them every day until the traps are removed. This commitment does not change because of bad weather or other inconveniences.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> See [https://www.hunter-ed.com/nationaltrapper/studyGuide/Daily-Trap-Checks-Are-Essential/221099\\_87952/](https://www.hunter-ed.com/nationaltrapper/studyGuide/Daily-Trap-Checks-Are-Essential/221099_87952/).

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Trapping-and-Steel-jawed-Leghold-Traps.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> See Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, “Public Comment Summary for June 2017 Trapping Proposal” available at <http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/insideFwp/commission/meetings/agenda.html?coversheet&topicId=41849575>.

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix, Table 4. In addition, Utah permits a person, other than the owner, to possess, set, disturb or remove a trapping device provided they have a furbearer license and written authorization. See [UTAH ADMIN. CODE r. 657-11-9\(6\)](#). Although not explicitly stated, it follows that this authorized person would be able to fulfill the trap check requirement. See also Virginia, which expressly allows for the use of remote trapping systems in lieu of a physical trap visit provided the systems meet certain specifications. [4 VA. ADMIN. CODE § 15-40-195\(C\)](#).

Further, in its guidelines for the use of wild animals in research, the American Society of Mammalogists states that most traps should be checked at least once a day, and restraining traps like snares and foothold traps must be checked “twice daily or more often depending upon target species and potential for capture of non-target species” (Sikes et al 2011, p. 242). The American Veterinary Medical Association opposes the use of conventional foothold traps and states that traps should be checked “at least once every 24 hours.”<sup>15</sup>

Finally, in 2017, FWP itself recommended a mandatory trap-check interval:

FWP should have a maximum time allowed legally between trap checks as a means of dealing with the occasional instance of negligence. Such a regulation would allow enforcement to pursue clear cases of negligence and would likely encourage reduced trap check intervals for some who currently check at “too long of an interval.”<sup>16</sup>

One concern that trappers may have with mandatory daily checks is that an emergency could prevent them from fulfilling the requirement of physically visiting their traps on a given day. However, at least four states with daily trap checks have addressed this issue by allowing trappers to provide written authorization and grant another licensed trapper permission to check on their traps.<sup>17</sup> Montana could incorporate similar language in a daily trap inspection requirement.

In sum, in order to minimize stress, struggling, exertion, injury, and unnecessary mortality to target and non-target species, and in order to improve enforcement and discourage negligent trap check intervals, we respectfully request that FWP adopt a regulation requiring that all restraining and kill traps and snares set for all species in Montana be visually inspected at least once each day or every 24 hours.

Thank you for considering these comments. 5

Sincerely,  
Zack Strong  
Staff Attorney  
Director, Carnivore Conservation  
[zstrong@nrdc.org](mailto:zstrong@nrdc.org)  
Madison Dipman  
Northern Rockies Legal Intern  
[mdipman@nrdc.org](mailto:mdipman@nrdc.org)  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
317 East Mendenhall St., Suites D and E  
Bozeman, MT 59715 6



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## Appendix: *Trap Check Requirements in the United States*

Table 1: General Trap Check Intervals by State for Live Sets\* **INTERVAL:** **BY STATUTE/REGULATION:**

<b>ALABAMA</b>	24 hours <sup>1</sup>	ALA. CODE § 9-11-266
<b>ALASKA</b>	None	N/A
<b>ARIZONA</b>	Daily <sup>2</sup>	ARIZ. ADMIN. CODE § 12-4-307(G)(1)
<b>ARKANSAS</b>	Daily	002-00-001 ARK. CODE R. § 17.02
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	Daily <sup>3</sup>	CAL. CODE REGS. tit. 14, § 465.5(g)(2)
<b>COLORADO</b>	Daily <sup>4</sup>	COLO. CODE REGS. § 406-3 #302(B)(1)
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>	24 hours <sup>5</sup>	CONN. GEN. STAT. § 26-72
<b>DELAWARE</b>	24 hours <sup>6</sup>	DEL. CODE tit. 7, § 705
<b>FLORIDA</b>	24 hours	FLA. ADMIN. CODE r. 68A-24.002(1)
<b>GEORGIA</b>	24 hours	GA. CODE § 27-3-63(a)(3)
<b>HAWAII</b>	No furbearer trapping	HAW. CODE R. § 13-123-22(2)(J)
<b>IDAHO</b>	72 hours <sup>7</sup>	IDAHO ADMIN. CODE r. 13.01.16.200.01
<b>ILLINOIS</b>	Daily	520 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/2.33a(a)
<b>INDIANA</b>	24 hours	IND. CODE § 14-22-6-4(2)
<b>IOWA</b>	24 hours	IOWA CODE § 481A.92
<b>KANSAS</b>	Daily	KAN. ADMIN. REGS. § 115-5-1(c)(13)
<b>KENTUCKY</b>	24 hours	KY. REV. STAT. § 150.410(2)
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	Daily	LA. REV. STAT. § 56:260(A)
<b>MAINE</b>	Daily	ME. REV. STAT. tit. 12, § 12255(1)
<b>MARYLAND</b>	Daily <sup>8</sup>	MD. CODE REGS. 08.03.06.03(E)
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>	Daily	321 MASS. CODE REGS. 3.02(5)(e)(11)
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	Daily <sup>9</sup>	Mich. Wildlife Conservation Order § 3.600(12)
<b>MINNESOTA</b>	Daily	MINN. R. 6234.2200, 6234.2400
<b>MISSISSIPPI</b>	36 hours	MISS. CODE ANN. § 49-7-13(4)(d)
<b>MISSOURI</b>	Daily	MO. CODE REGS. tit. 3, § 10-8.510(2)
<b>MONTANA</b>	None	N/A
<b>NEBRASKA</b>	Daily	163 NEB. ADMIN. CODE § 4-001.03A1
<b>NEVADA</b>	96 hours <sup>10</sup>	NEV. ADMIN. CODE § 503.152
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>	Daily	N.H. REV. STAT. § 210:13
<b>NEW JERSEY</b>	24 hours <sup>11</sup>	N.J. ADMIN. CODE § 7:25-5.12(i)

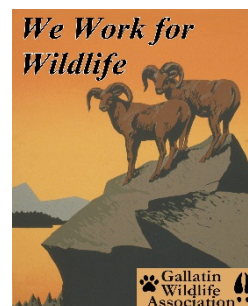
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	Daily12	N.M. CODE R. § 19.31.10.15(G)
<b>NEW YORK</b>	24 hours13	N.Y. COMP. CODES R. & REGS. tit. 6, § 6.3(a)(3)
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>	Daily	15A N.C. ADMIN. CODE 10B.0110
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	None	N/A
<b>OHIO</b>	Daily	OHIO ADMIN. CODE 1501:31- 15-09(G)
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	24 hours	OKLA. STAT. tit. 29, §5- 502(C)
<b>OREGON</b>	48 hours14	OR. REV. STAT. § 498.172
<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	36 hours	34 PA. CONS. STAT. § 2361(a)(10)

230. *From: Clint Nagel*  
*To: FWP Wildlife*  
*Cc: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on ending trapping in areas within the urban interface of communities in Montana*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:19:11 PM*  
*Attachments: 20200727.GWA Position letter on trapping.docx*

Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the respective Commission:  
Below are comments that the Gallatin Wildlife Association has put together  
with other non-profits over the issue of removing trapping from wildland  
urban interface areas. Please accept our comments in good faith and thank  
you for your consideration.  
Clint Nagel, President  
Gallatin Wildlife Association

## GALLATIN WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 5317  
Bozeman, MT 59717  
(406) 586-1729



July 27, 2020

To the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Commission:

Dear Commissioners:

Please accept Gallatin Wildlife Association's comments on trapping. Trapping has no place in the urban interface or recreational areas in Montana. On the next page is the Custer Gallatin National Forest preferred alternative for the Gallatin Range south of Bozeman. Please refer to that map as we list many designated areas which should be excluded from trapping:

- All of the pink recreation emphasis areas
- Recommended wilderness
- Bozeman Creek watershed
- Cabin Creek Wildlife and Recreation Area
- All of the research natural areas
- Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn WSA
- Key Linkage areas
- Recreation emphasis areas in the Bridger Range

We certainly agree with others who say that the commission must look beyond just trails and setbacks in their consideration of closures. We must close entire areas that are used for recreation and for the Gallatin Range as those areas are becoming more and more populated with people and their pets. Those areas are listed above. These areas of heavy recreational use should have trapping removed. Areas of individual drainages can be provided upon request.

In Montana, outdoor recreation generates \$7.1 billion in consumer spending, creates 71,000 direct Montana jobs, and generates \$2.2 billion in wages and salaries for Montanans according to a 2017 Headwaters Economic report. The majority of this money comes from nonresident tourists and the main thing they come to see is wildlife according to University of Montana polling. Trapping is definitely a negative to those who come to see our native wildlife.

The economy of Bozeman is healthy because we have qualities that attract businesses and new landowners. This is reflected in an economic evaluation (using government data) from Headwaters Economics. The evaluation shows that a large portion of residents, those who have non-labor income, come here because it is a special place; not because they come to find work. What makes the area special? Our public lands and access to them.

Less than 1/2 of 1 percent of people in Montana trap, yet trappers control 99% of our public lands. This statistic is out of step in Gallatin County, and not just Bozeman, look at the amount of recreation emphasis area in the West Yellowstone Area.

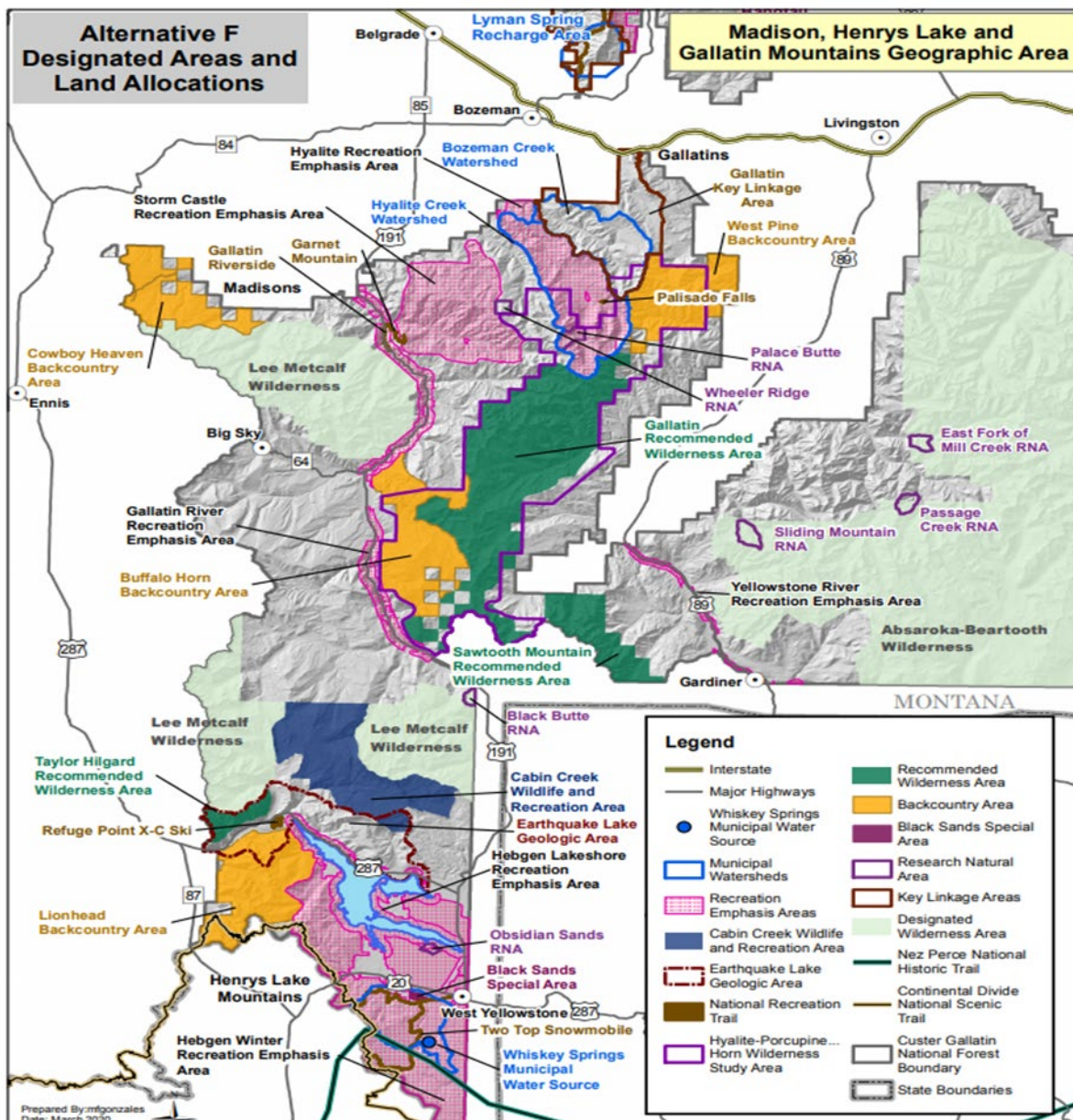
Please accept our comments and concerns and remove trapping from public lands that have since been determined to have high-recreational impact. Wildlife in these areas are going to be stressed enough from the visual and auditory effects of people and their actions. Habitat fragmentation, climate change and the additional impact from recreational enthusiasts are having a detrimental impact on our wildlife. We say enough is enough. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clinton Nagel".

Clinton Nagel, President  
Gallatin Wildlife Association

Nancy Schultz, Secretary  
Gallatin Wildlife Association



On the map, Big Sky is a dot, but the pictures below show a small part of the impact that Big Sky exerts on the area. This should be taken into account. The pressure on all wildlife species is extraordinary.

231. From: Chris Smith <csmith@wildearthguardians.org>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:47:42 PM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>; FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>; Williams, Martha <Martha.Williams@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on trapping regulations

**Attachments: FWP Proposal 7.28.20.pdf (151.11 KB)**

Dear Director Williams, Chairman Colton, and members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission,

On behalf of WildEarth Guardians, Footloose Montana, Western Watersheds Project, the Mountain Lion Foundation, and Humane Society of Western Montana, please find the attached comments proposing closed safety areas near Missoula.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith

--



**CHRIS SMITH**

*Southern Rockies Wildlife Advocate*

*he/him*

*(505) 395-6177*

*[www.wildearthguardians.org](http://www.wildearthguardians.org)*

*[\[wildearthguardians.org\]](http://wildearthguardians.org)*



[\[facebook.com\]](https://facebook.com)



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July 28, 2020

Shane Colton, Chairman

Richard Stuker, Vice-Chairman Tim

Aldrich, Commissioner Pat Byorth,

Commissioner Logan Brower,

Commissioner

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Martha Williams, Director,

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

via Electronic Mail

Dear Director Williams, Chairman Colton, and members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission,

On behalf of a coalition of conservation and animal welfare groups which includes WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project, the Mountain Lion Foundation, the Humane Society of Western Montana and Footloose Montana we are proposing lands and waters that should be made trap free in the wildland- urban interface and areas of high recreation use in and around Missoula.



Outdoor recreation is continuing to grow as more and more people enjoy spending time in the outdoors. COVID-19 has only made that need greater. Our parks, refuges and forests are experiencing record numbers of users according to Lolo National Forest Supervisor Jennifer Hensiek and Council Grove State Park Supervisor Michael Kustudia. According to the Property and Environmental Research Center, based in Bozeman, half of all Americans recreate outdoors. Outdoor recreation accounted for \$412 billion of GDP in 2016. This sector has grown faster than the overall economy in three of the four years analyzed. In the past ten years an additional 10 million people recreated outdoors, meaning one million new people recreate on public lands every year.

In Montana, outdoor recreation generates \$7.1 billion in consumer spending, creates 71,000 direct Montana jobs, and generates \$2.2 billion in wages and salaries for Montanans according to a 2017 Headwaters Economic report. The increase in recreation has skyrocketed in the past thirty years, making our forests, state lands and waters a vital economic and social engine.

From cross-county skiing to mountain biking, from hiking to fishing to boating, our public lands and waters are a vital outlet for people—both residents and visitors.

By contrast, trapping is a dwindling activity that is hyper-niche. Less than 0.5% of Montanans participate in trapping. Moreover, trapping continues to face strong opposition from Montanans, especially those in urban centers. With significant opposition, danger, and growing use of public lands, it makes little economic or recreational sense to allow this practice on 99% of Montana's public lands. Nowhere is this more apparent than in lands that are part of wildland-urban interface and areas of heavy recreational use.

More than 100 countries have banned or severely limited trapping. In the West, Arizona, Colorado, Washington, and California have largely banned trapping on public lands. Similar legislation has gained

momentum in New Mexico and Oregon. The Forest Service has set the precedent in Montana by making the 28,000-acre Rattlesnake National Recreation off-limits to trapping, since 1980.

In addition to the “non-target” wildlife indiscriminate injure or kill, family pets in urban centers pay the price for FWP's laissez-faire attitude towards trapping. Like most Montana cities, Missoula is a dog- friendly community, yet it's our pets that are paying the price in lost limbs and death, with no accountability. Traps kill pets and endanger humans, particularly children, every year.

FWP has long managed hunting through block management; block management also stipulates the closure of certain areas as safety zones where hunting is off limits around communities or in areas near human inhabitation. Yet to date, this same policy has not been applied to trapping. Trapping is dangerous to people, pets and wildlife that are not the intended victim. Missoula County Commissioners have pointed out that safety zones are vital for community safety. Safety zones should be utilized by the department to regulate trapping. Montana's public lands and waters are vast; dogs, like people, deserve the opportunity to roam and explore public lands and swim in the rivers. Trapping is stealing that freedom.

In requesting input from the public, the Department made many inferences to “trails” that people want off-limits to trapping. While that is important, we believe the time has come to allow public access safe from traps to larger areas of land in the wildland-urban interface to reflect the dramatic increase in recreation and public safety. Our proposal highlights specific areas of heavy recreational use and looks to new areas that will clearly be used with recreation as its principle purpose.

We thank the agency and the commission for the opportunity to present our comments.

Areas that should be off-limits to trapping in and around Missoula, MT:

**Kelly Island and surrounding waters: 705.94 acres**



Kelly Island is a recreational hub in Missoula, used for hiking, fishing, hunting, bird watching and rafting. The 705 acres that define the undeveloped island are a unique mix of cottonwood bottoms, large meadows, and ponderosa pine forests with remarkable wildlife populations. Waterfowl concentrate here in winter and spring; the numerous backwater sloughs provide ideal resting spots. Around March, great blue herons begin to gather at the island's historic heron nesting area. Canada geese also nest on the island, sometimes in the heron nests. Wood duck boxes and goose nesting platforms have been erected here. Red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, and great horned owls commonly nest on the islands as well. This is a good spot to see Lewis' woodpecker and bald eagles. White-tailed deer are extremely abundant and seen year-round; beavers are common, and foxes are seen occasionally. Traps placed on land and in the waters around the island pose a dangerous situation for locals and visitors alike, with no signage and, for many, no understanding that a place in the heart of our community would be home to dangerous traps. In addition, the biodiversity of the island and waters is impacted by the indiscriminate nature of the traps. Missoula City Councilor Julie Merritt encountered a coyote in a trap on Kelly Island. To this day, she "is haunted by seeing that animal suffering and feeling helpless to save it."

This island is a crown jewel in our community and it is clearly a place where trapping must be banned both on land and in the waters that border the Island.

## Lolo Trails

The second phase of acquisition of the Southern Pines Plantation property will soon be transferred in its entirety to the Forest Service. Lolo Trails is 14,000 acres of land just 14 miles south of Missoula. The area preserves portions of several historical sites, including the Nez Perce National Historical Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historical Trail, the Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark and the Ice Age Floods Geologic Trail. The area is home to a number of endangered and threatened species including Canada lynx and bull trout. The area is home to wolves, beaver and other keystone species. Recreation and tourism account for 21% of the jobs in Missoula and this area was purchased by Land and Water Conservation funding for the express purpose of recreation for the community. Ending trapping here is extremely important.

## Council Grove State Park

This park marks the site of the 1855 council between Isaac Stevens and the Flathead Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille Indians. Here the Indians signed the Hellgate Treaty and relinquished their ancestral hunting grounds in exchange for a reservation in the Mission valley.

There are 187 acres making up this site that sits at an elevation of 3,198 feet. This park contains large, old-growth ponderosa pines, grassy fields by the park picnic area, and cottonwoods along the Clark Fork. There's also an aspen grove fed by a vernal pool (a shallow depression in clay-like soil that fills with water seasonally) and make great breeding habitat for frogs and salamanders. The open grove structure of the park attracts a wide variety of birds. This includes flickers, sapsuckers, and many species of woodpeckers. Great blue herons have been spotted along the river's edge. White-tailed deer are often seen, the occasional black bear may wander through the park.

The park is divided by a channel in the river with its wilder section to the west.

This park is heavily used year-round by people with dogs. From the water to the tall pines and grasses, it is a dog mecca. It is also a place that families enjoy. The Director of Council Grove State Park, Michael Kustudia told our coalition that this park is becoming a hub for the community and their dogs; the growth has been expedient. Meanwhile the public remains in the dark that trapping occurs here. There is no logical reason for traps to be in this small park, or the waters that border the park. It creates a very dangerous situation from a public safety perspective and trapping should be banned in a place of such heavy public usage.

The Park Superintendent has stated that “trapping has not occurred in the past three years, but there had been one request.” With such a low level of interest and more than 40,000 annual visitors a year combined with the historical nature of the park, trapping should be banned.

### Johnsrud Park

The park that is on a bend in the Blackfoot River is a community favorite. Long known as a place to swim, dive, fish, kayak and raft, Johnsrud is a beautiful stretch of the river and part of the fabric of life in Missoula. Canada geese, bald eagles and other raptors tower above the cliffs opposite the park. The Park sees more than 85,000 visitors each year. Most are families that come to experience the rich environment and family-based recreation. The area is also popular with cyclists, who travel along the old Milwaukee Road railroad bed across from the park, as do cross-county skiers. The Bureau of Land Management has purchased another 27,000 acres adjacent to the park making this a federally controlled section that sees usage year-round. The proposed Johnsrud-McNamara Road project would allow even more visitation

by the paving of this heavily used dirt access road. We know there has been historical trapping in the park. It is time to for that to end.

- Additionally, we suggest a 1-mile buffer in the BLM lands that are directly adjacent to the park. The rationale is clear: people rafting the river, or hiking and camping away from the park on the river’s edge could get caught in a trap on the BLM lands. We believe there should be clear signage to warn people leaving Johnsrud Park and a buffer for safety is in the public interest.

### Fishing Access points from Hamilton through Erskine Fishing Access

Fishing access areas are part of a democratic process that was validated by the Montana State Supreme Court in 1984. The ruling states, “Recreational use means with respect to surface waters: fishing, hunting, swimming, floating in small craft unless otherwise prohibited or regulated by law, or craft propelled by oar or paddle, other water-related pleasure activities, and related unavoidable or incidental uses.”

Nowhere in the ruling is trapping mentioned. Yet, trapping is allowed at fishing access points within 1000 ft. from boat ramps on land. There is no setback for water sets, which can be set at the high- water mark if partially submerged. These traps are a major threat to kill dogs, and this area sees considerable use by anglers, families, children, and pets.

1. The waters that border fishing access sites should be off-limits to trapping, this is crucial to public safety.
  2. Additionally, the 1000 feet boundary on land traps should be expanded to 2000 ft. beyond all borders of the site, not from the boat ramp. This change will ensure a true safety zone and prevent family pets from harm.
- Woodside Bridge- 3.5 acres
  - Tucker Crossing-250.72 acres
  - Bell Crossing--65.02 acres
  - Bass Creek--13.59 acres
  - Poker Joe--11.62 acres
  - Florence Bridge--11.58 acres
  - Chief Looking Glass--13.05 acres
  - Maclay Flats—822 acres, trapping is banned on land, but should now include all areas that are on the water.
  - Kelly Island, 848 acres (no private land)
  - Deep Creek--36.14 acres
  - Harpers Bridge--12.45 acres
  - Erskine-- 428.34 acres

## Rock Creek-From Eudailey's Bridge to confluence of Clark Fork River (32.5 miles)

Rock Creek is a 52-mile-long (84 km) blue ribbon trout fishing stream in Missoula and Granite County, Montana. Rock Creek is a tributary of the Clark Fork River. The river's headwaters are in Lolo National Forest near Philipsburg, Montana. The river roughly parallels the Sapphire Mountains and enters the Clark Fork near Clinton, Montana. People sift for sapphires along the river.

Wildlife is extensive in Rock Creek. Bighorn sheep, black bears, mountain lions, beaver, moose, elk, deer, wolves and coyotes prosper in this spectacular setting. But it is fishing that draws people to the water year-round. This freestone river is home to cutthroats, browns, rainbows and the elusive bull trout is a blue-ribbon trout stream.

People come from all over the world to fish in Rock Creek. For Missoula residents, the location makes it a prime spot for camping, fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing. Campgrounds, cabins and the Ranch at Rock Creek (which bans trapping on their property) accommodate many who flock to this area for recreating. Missoula and Clinton residents go for day trips year-round.

This stretch of the creek and tributaries is all bordered by Forest Service lands, including the Welcome Creek Wilderness. Campgrounds include Norton, Dalles, Harry's Flat and Siria.

For the community of Missoula, it is also a painful reminder of what can happen to our family pets. In March of 2008, along a Forest Service interpretive trail in Rock Creek, Filip Panusz's dog Cupcake, a young border collie, was lured to and killed by a conibear trap right beside the Interpretive Trail on a spring hike.

Closing this stretch of Rock Creek will prevent other unnecessary and horrible tragedies from occurring again.

## Marshall Canyon

This area within the Missoula interface has become an increasingly popular area for hiking, mountain biking, dog walking and cross-county skiing. Deer, elk and other wildlife enjoy the majesty of this canyon and sloping hills. The former ski area has long been a place for outdoor enthusiasts. Lolo Forest Supervisor Jennifer Hensieck feels this is likely to become a recreational hotspot in the community in the coming years and will see "concentrated public use." This mix of Forest Service and Five Valley Land trust lands part of the Plum Creek purchase, are a valuable part of Missoula's conservation legacy and ensuring that they are trap-free is important for the safety and security of those that chose to recreate.

## Conclusion

Recreation and trapping do not co-exist. There is always a price to pay. The price is paid not by the trapping community, but rather by those that love recreating in the outdoors. This proposal, while encompassing a variety of areas in and around Missoula, in total still remains smaller than the 28,000 acres that was set aside in the Rattlesnake Wilderness Recreation Area.

That should give perspective of how much land still remains open to trapping in the Missoula corridor and surrounding lands. This proposal does not include other areas valued by Missoulians and visitors for recreation. But it does begin the important process of creating safe areas for our community; places where families, pets and people can recreate without fear, so that the idea of outdoors--places which allow the mind and body to feel free and explore, can be fully achieved.

Offsets and narrow trail closures are not enough to keep people and their pets safe from trapping in the urban-wild interfaces around Missoula. Expert economists, elected officials, and the public want traps off of these public lands. They want FWP to take seriously the idea that entire land and waters, not simply trails should be made trap-free. People deserve the right to have no fear of hidden, baited traps when they go out to pick berries, camp, study plants, collect firewood, fish, hunt and watch wildlife—huge parts of Montana's economy and culture.

The economy of Missoula depends not only on accessible and safe public lands, but also on healthy and functioning ecosystems. Clean abundant waters depend on beavers. Instead of having to impose laws restricting fishing because rivers are too low and warm for fish, we need to allow beavers to recharge our waters. Healthy lands and riparian areas depend on keystone species including pine marten, bobcat, wolves, and otter. Deer, elk and bear are also caught in traps—hunters know this.

This proposal is a first step in a long process of setting aside lands and waters of recreational value to communities across this state. It is first and foremost about public safety. We regulate for the betterment and security of the entire society. Trapping is a risk not just to species of wildlife and pets, but to children and community members. Trapping is a radical exception to common sense and seems out of place with the reality of what risk is and what foolhardiness is. We ask that the commission take seriously the consequences to the long-term viability of allowing practices such as trapping to continue in recreational areas.

We thank you for consideration of our proposal and look forward to working with you on a successful outcome.

Sincerely,

Stephen Capra Executive Director Footloose Montana

Sarah McMillan Conservation Director WildEarth Guardians  
Jocelyn Leroux  
Washington and Montana Director Western Watersheds Project  
Marta Pierpoint  
Executive Director  
Humane Society of Western Montana  
Michelle Blake  
Western Region Coordinator  
The Mountain Lion Foundation

## GENERAL TRAPPING COMMENTS

232. *From: Chance Thedford <xmodriver@icloud.com>*

*Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 7:22 PM*

*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

It seems to me that the anti groups are continually attacking trapping rights and privileges in an attempt to ultimately ban trapping nation wide. If you look at trapping regulations in any state you will see that we are the most regulated group of anyone that is considered outdoorsmen. When trapping rules keep changing to appease these “activists”, it ends up becoming a death by a thousand cuts. More restrictions will not help anything.

Chance Thedford

Sent from my iPhone

233. *From: Patrizia Filippi <patrizia.filippi31@gmail.com>*

*Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 1:25 AM*  
*To: FWP Commission <FWComm@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

> I have been supporting a Montana Environmental group, Footloose Montana, that exposes the horrors of trapping. It is so disturbing, that I decided to write this to you.

>

> Animals undergo terrible suffering before their useless death. Why are these animals killed in the first place? They have a place in nature, they do not bother humans. These humans instead take pictures or video of themselves next to dying animals, or while they are killing them, which is sadistic. One wonders about their mental health and if they could be dangerous to other humans as well.

>

> This practice, in fact, promotes cruelty and desensitizes to other's suffering. If you read the comments of the fellow trappers among themselves, you will understand.

>

> I, as an humble citizen, urge you to review these policies and become a champion of the otherwise voiceless creatures of beautiful Montana.

>

> Thank you for your attention to this matter.

>

> Patrizia Filippi  
> PSC 103 BOX 1727  
> APO AE 09603

*234. From: Clarence Sanders <sandora99@msn.com>*  
*Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:16:45 PM*  
*To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Trapping Regulations in Montana*

Hello,

My name is Clarence Sanders, and I reside in Bozeman, MT.

I write to comment on, and strongly oppose, indiscriminate and essentially unregulated trapping in Montana.

It is clear that unregulated and widespread trapping is not consistent with life in an urban, civilized society.

Trapping is a threat to human recreation activities, to pets, and more generally is an inhumane practice. Moreover, trapping is not needed, as we have a developed fur farming industry to serve the needs of the fashion industry.

I support and join with efforts of organizations seeking the restriction of trapping in public recreation areas around Missoula, and other urban areas of Montana.

Some of these organizations, among others, include Footloose Montana, WildEarth Guardians, and the Humane Society of Western Montana.

Below are a few reasons why trapping should be banned in recreation areas where there is a demonstrated threat to public safety.

> The state establishes safety zones for hunting, and it is obvious that the same regulatory policy should apply to trapping.  
> Indiscriminate, deadly traps have no place in our urban recreation areas.  
> Too many family pets are injured or killed in traps (how would you feel if it was your young daughter's pet dog that died an agonizing death in a trap.)  
> Recreation is a \$7 billion industry in Montana, and people (both residents and tourists) deserve access to public recreation areas without fear of traps.

Please do the right thing, take the proper regulatory action, and ban trapping from public recreation areas in Montana.

Thank you,  
Clarence Sanders

---

New Outlook Express and Windows Live Mail replacement - get it here:  
<https://www.oeclassic.com/> [oeclassic.com](https://www.oeclassic.com/)

*235. From: Sheila Garvin <sheilagarvin2@gmail.com>  
Sent on: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 3:42:24 AM  
To: FWP Wildlife <fwpwld@mt.gov>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

Please stop trapping everywhere. Period.

Thank you,  
Sheila Garvin

*236. From: Lawrence Scrima  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop trapping!  
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:52:34 AM*

We have lost 83% of wildlife over the last 40 years! We can not afford to lose more and trapping is among the most inhumane and cruel way to kill wildlife! Please stop trapping, Poisoning and trophy hunting of wildlife now !

*237. From: barbjadams13  
To: FWP Commission  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping  
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:18:15 AM*

Why are you allowing and advocating for barbaric trapping of animals?  
Is this the 1800's Jeremiah Johnson days or 2020?  
Do you CARE about the suffering of innocent animals who languish in these traps for days??!!  
NO ONE NEEDS FUR!  
If native predatory animals are going after your livestock, protect them with FENCES.  
Every business has its costs and losses. Ranchers should be no different. Business

owners cannot shoot thieves- RESPECT OUR WILDLIFE!!!  
Barbara Adams  
Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

238. *From: sarah carson*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Traps*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 9:34:35 AM*

Why on earth in this day and age do you still condone torchering and murdering wildlife with traps there is NO REASON on GODS GREEN EARTH for this to continue they are put here by there CREATOR for a reason . Nature would have perfect balance if you will stop interfering . Educate yourself and stop murdering our wildlife there are ways to coexist with all life  
[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android \[go.onelink.me\]](https://go.onelink.me)

239. *From: Judy Lester*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 7:33:52 AM*

For anyone on this Commission who feels that trapping in leg holds is “okay” lets hope when your judgement day comes you won’t be sentenced to become an animal who will die the same way. Where is your morality?

240. *From: Brandi Vezina*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] No more trapping*  
*Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:35:07 AM*

To whom it may concern,  
Trapping is a sadistic and tortuous way to kill animals! Please be open and willing to change this practice.  
Marci,  
Brandi Vezina  
B Env Sci, B Ed  
Get [Outlook for iOS \[aka.ms\]](https://aka.ms)

241. *From: Shelly Green*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:13:56 PM*

Please stop this utterly inhumane, barbaric trapping. Animals don’t deserve this cruel, slow and painful death.  
I wonder what is wrong with a human that can inflict this torture on an innocent animal just trying to live peacefully.  
Humans are the monsters.  
Shame on people that think this is actually ok.  
Thank you for your time  
Shelly  
Sent from my iPhone



242. *From: Lyndsey Mckillop*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 8:00:54 PM*

Hi,  
Trapping is beyond barbaric and needs to end!  
Please stop this ! It is not necessary. Animals need some protection from humane beings.  
Please take this into consideration.  
Sincerely  
Lyndsey McKillop  
Sent from my iPhone

243. *From: Nic D*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] BAN barbaric leghold traps!!!*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:49:45 PM*

How many know massive injurious leghold traps, strangling snares and body crushing quick kill conibear traps can be secreted, baited with food or lures, RIGHT ON and ALONG "closed" PUBLIC roads in Montana? No signage is required either.  
The Montana trapping regulations require trap setbacks of 50' and for wolf trap sets, 150', from the edge of public roads.  
HOWEVER: "Roads closed year-round to motor vehicle and OHV use are not subject to these setbacks, for instance, Kelly-humped roads that are inaccessible to motor vehicle and OHV use but are lawfully accessible by snowmobile."  
Why? So trappers can kill more wolves. Animals, just like people, choose to use the path of least resistance.  
TFMPL and our allies managed to finally kill HB552, a bill with the same exact language written by FWP, in the 2019 legislature. The Montana legislators did not want the responsibility for this potentially horrific tragedy just waiting to happen to some unsuspecting person, a child, their family pet.  
Yet, later in 2019, FWP brought it forth then to the Wildlife Commission. Although it was reported as only several, TFMPL tabulated and advised the Commission, roughly 60 public comments objected to the setback exceptions and wanted greater setbacks. After multiple hearings, the Commission voted 3:2 to allow the exceptions. We thank Commissioner Stuker and Commissioner Aldrich for voting in opposition.  
Chairman Colton had second thoughts and requested trap setbacks be taken up again in the 2020 furbearer trapping proposals. However, FWP did not include them.  
Some people covet these very roads to safely hike, horseback ride, cross country ski, often perhaps accompanied with their children and dog/s.  
As a regular tourist and owner of a second vacation home in MT, my family and I may regular go hiking, skiing, etc. clubs use, and other high use areas deserve and want to safely enjoy.... that trapping setbacks should not only be applied to ALL public roads and trails but INCREASED!  
Thanks to a handful of dedicated Montanans in the past, setbacks were expanded to 500' along some requested recreational high use roads and trails in District 1 and 3, i.e NW and SW Montana.

FRANKLY, TRAPPING IS BARBARIC AND VILE!!!! ALL TRAPS SHOULD BE PERMANENTLY BANNED!!! We must protect our precious iconic essential wildlife like wolves, foxes, coyotes, bears, etc.  
Kind regards,  
Kellen Dunn

244. *From: Nickie.Duong@infineon.com*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: BAN barbaric leghold traps!!!*  
*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 7:38:42 PM*

How many know massive injurious leghold traps, strangling snares and body crushing quick kill conibear traps can be secreted, baited with food or lures, RIGHT ON and ALONG "closed" PUBLIC roads in Montana? No signage is required either.

The Montana trapping regulations require trap setbacks of 50' and for wolf trap sets, 150', from the edge of public roads.

HOWEVER: "Roads closed year-round to motor vehicle and OHV use are not subject to these setbacks, for instance, Kelly-humped roads that are inaccessible to motor vehicle and OHV use but are lawfully accessible by snowmobile."

Why? So trappers can kill more wolves. Animals, just like people, choose to use the path of least resistance.

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FRANKLY, TRAPPING IS BARBARIC AND VILE!!!! ALL TRAPS SHOULD BE PERMANENTLY BANNED!!! We must protect our precious iconic essential wildlife like wolves, foxes, coyotes, bears, etc.

Kind regards,  
Dr. Nicolas Dunn and Kellen Dunn

245. *From: Patrizia Filippi*  
*To: FWP Commission*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] No more trapping*

*Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 2:47:20 PM*

No more trapping horrors!

Patrizia Filippi

Rhode Island

Sent from my iPhone

246. *From: [loreleihorry](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wildlife trapping*

*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 1:48:18 PM*

Please stop torturing wildlife in animal traps. We will NEVER VISIT THERE as long as you allow this to continue.

People vote with their wallets. There are many people who boycott any travel to Montana for this specific reason.

Thank you for your time

Mrs. Lorelei Horry

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy Phone.

247. *From: [Judy Sifers](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Trapping*

*Date: Saturday, July 25, 2020 9:15:14 AM*

This intent of this email is to respectfully ask you to eliminate trapping. It is outdated and barbaric. I am concerned

that you will laugh this off and toss the request aside. Please don't. Montana MUST eliminate trapping.

Karma will not be kind.

Sent from my iPhone

248. *From: [Ian Stanford](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] End your trapping policy*

*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 10:35:41 PM*

Please end your trapping season on the Swift Fox. Your policies toward trapping are out of line with any ethics or population management, and the practice is simply barbaric.

We typically travel to Montana a few times a year to visit friends. We are skipping our trip this year (we are still heading out but we are avoiding Montana). We are doing this because we cannot believe that such a beautiful state can still allow a practice as asinine as trapping.

Please stop it. Beat -Ian

Ian Stanford

c 507.313.9845

249. *From: [Candace Park](#)*

*To: [FWP Commission](#)*

*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop trapping*

*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 7:23:41 PM*

Please stop using leg hold traps. It is so cruel. To be in one for even an instant is torture, but these animals are left for days at a time, suffering! This is not acceptable, please stop it!  
Candace Park  
Sent from my iPad

*250. From: Liliana Castillo*  
*To: FWP Commission*  
*Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wildlife*  
*Date: Friday, July 24, 2020 6:16:22 PM*

To whom it should concern....  
For years... atrocious acts against wildlife. NATIVE AMERICAN Wildlife.  
Here before you were shipped to this land.  
What is the hatred to innocent animals that belong here in a land of freedom you immigrants call your own, despite of how it happened.  
Who puts you in office and how does this gets to be allowed??  
Stop this suffering. There's a pandemic. A global virus spread from animal markets in China.  
My, let's not be similar to the culture that has no remorse or compassion.  
How do we get more minorities in office to protect our wildlife??  
Stop this!!!